



**UNITED UNIVERSITY
PROFESSIONS**

***Testimony on Potential Cuts to Medicaid
by the Medicaid Redesign Team II***

Presented To:

Medicaid Redesign Team II at
MRT II Public Forum, Albany NY

February 21, 2020

Prepared by:

United University Professions
PO Box 15143
Albany, NY 12212-5143
800-342-4206
www.uupinfo.org

UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS

Good Morning. My name is Dr. Frederick E. Kowal, and I am President of United University Professions. UUP is the nation's largest higher education union. We represent over 37,000 academics and professional staff at the State University of New York, including SUNY's public academic medical centers.

Each year, we provide life-saving, state-of-the-art health care services to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers in every corner of the state, from Buffalo to the Bronx, Stony Brook to Syracuse, and Brooklyn to Barnes Corners.

I am here today to talk about the importance of about our public teaching hospitals: SUNY Downstate in Brooklyn, Stony Brook University in Stony Brook, and Upstate Medical University in Syracuse.

These enhanced safety net hospitals serve all patients that pass through their doors, whether they can pay for treatment or not. Many of our patients are Medicaid recipients.

Our SUNY hospitals exist for two reasons: One, to provide a public good and care for the most vulnerable New Yorkers; and two, to train the next generation of doctors and health care providers at a time when New York and the rest of the country are on the precipice of a doctor shortage crisis.

Unlike many private and nonprofit hospitals that will only invest in areas of treatment that generate revenue, our public hospitals focus on treatment and services for the community, regardless of the bottom line. In turn, our hospitals do not turn a profit. It is not their purpose. Yet, they subsidize the medical schools, which rely on the hospitals for financial aid and operational support.

The troubles at our state hospitals are compounded by DSH cuts at the federal level and ongoing state funding cuts, part of New York's long-term disinvestment in SUNY. State funding to our hospitals dropped by \$515 million from 2011-12 to 2018-19. The reduction in funding and cuts to DSH and Medicaid are driving hospital deficits and in turn drive up the costs of Medical school education.

Cuts to SUNY's hospitals are short-sighted and will only come back to haunt us and our future generations. Our SUNY hospitals produce doctors and medical professionals that stay in New York State and serve our citizens. Downstate Medical, specifically, produces the diversity of doctors our society desperately needs to ensure we are fulfilling the needs of under-represented communities.

New York State must not walk away from its responsibility to ensure every citizen has access to quality medical care. It must not walk away from its responsibility to train the next generation of doctors and medical professionals. These are the people's hospitals. These are the state's hospitals. They must be sustained.

Your decisions over the next few weeks are crucial to the future of these hospitals, the future of public access to quality health care, and the education of thousands of medical school students.

The viability of SUNY and our public hospitals hangs in the balance.