



## The Chairman's Corner

by

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### **MEDICAID FUNDING LOSS WOULD BE DISASTROUS**

What would the loss of \$1,423,509 in federal Medicaid funding mean for Columbia County taxpayers? Under the 2023 budget, for comparison's sake, this would equal an estimated 3.5 percent tax increase in everyone's tax bill.

That is precisely what would occur should the proposed New York State fiscal year 2024 budget, which calls for intercepting federal Medicaid funding that has been shared with all 62 counties over the past two decades, come to fruition.

Clearly, this is an unacceptable proposal.

In the near term, the loss of funding would begin with passage of the state budget, thereby forcing Columbia County to move forward without the funds that have been allocated for the current budget, which would have the effect of compounding the devastating consequences of the governor's proposal.

Here's a little bit of history attached to this issue. For one, New York counties together contribute more to its Medicaid funding than all other counties in the United States combined. Further, in 2011, the state made a deal with local governments that enforced a two percent limit on local property taxes increases per year, while the state's end of the deal called for it to cover any Medicaid increases. That has remained in place ever since. But now, with taxpayers already wrestling with increasing costs in rent, housing, food, and utilities, it's hard to imagine a more onerous immediate impact dropped on local budgets and local taxpayers.

Adds county Board of Supervisors Minority Leader and New Lebanon Town Supervisor Tistrya Houghtling, "It would be extremely detrimental to Columbia County and all of its citizens to have the Medicaid funding stream taken away. We rely on this funding that we have historically received to provide much-needed services to our residents. I strongly urge all of our representatives at the state level to fight to ensure that the county retains this funding for the 2023 budget and for years to come."

Recently, the New York Association of Counties (NYSAC) unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the state to continue sharing federal Medicaid funding with local governments, as the federal government intends.

"The Governor's plan to shift \$625 million onto local property taxpayers would be so damaging to the residents we serve, and to affordability in New York State, that we felt we simply couldn't wait to make the county voice heard on this issue," said NYSAC President and Clinton County Administrator Michael E. Zurlo in an association release.

The governor, state legislators, and the citizens of New York need to understand that if this plan is enacted, come April 1, New Yorkers could see dramatic cuts to services as counties scramble to fill the giant hole this will blow in their budgets, and will unquestionably see significant increases in their housing costs as property tax increases raise their monthly escrow payment and rent, NYSAC states.