



# Albany to Witness Historic Protest of 15,000 Healthcare Workers Demanding Gov. Hochul Stop Cuts & Invest in Care

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ALBANY, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, March 20, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Thousands of caregivers, still reeling from three years of the pandemic, will descend on the Capitol to call on Gov. Hochul and legislative leadership to reverse healthcare cuts and Close the Medicaid Coverage Cap.

## WHO:

- Thousands of 1199SEIU members from across New York State who work in nearly all job titles in hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies, clinics, research labs, universities, homecare, and other healthcare settings.
- Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins, Senate Health Committee Chair Gustavo Rivera, and other legislative leaders.

## WHAT:

A series of marches around the Capitol Building to the MVP Arena as busloads of healthcare workers arrive throughout the morning, followed by a massive rally at the arena.

## WHERE:

Outside the Capitol Building and inside MVP Arena.

## WHEN: Tuesday, March 21, 2023

10:30AM - Healthcare workers will begin arriving in buses, marching around the Capitol.

12:45PM - Massive rally begins at MVP Arena (51 S. Pearl St, Albany).

1:30PM - 1199SEIU President George Gresham and legislative leaders will speak.

## WHY:

New York's healthcare system is facing an unprecedented crisis. Three years to the month that the first COVID case was confirmed in New York, patients and workers continue to face pandemic's aftershocks. Safety-net hospitals are on the brink of closure, emergency rooms are overflowing, nursing home residents face interminably long wait times for bedside care, and homecare services are becoming ever harder to come by.

Gov. Hochul's proposed budget utterly fails to grasp the gravity of this crisis. Rather than making the necessary investments to stabilize healthcare services, the proposed 5% Medicaid rate

increase is entirely offset by the elimination of savings from the 340b drug pricing program and the cut to the Indigent Care Pool. The budget includes cuts of \$700 million from safety net hospitals, reverses course on a major victory last year raising the pay of homecare workers to \$3 above the minimum wage, reduces wages for consumer-directed home health aides by \$4.09/hr., and fails to provide adequate funding increases to nursing homes as they struggle to recruit and retain staff to comply with nursing home reform laws.

With stagnating Medicaid funding and a depleted and burnt-out workforce, an austere healthcare budget would be devastating to New Yorkers, especially seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families.

1199SEIU is calling on NY's elected leaders to invest \$2.5 billion in healthcare in the FY2024 budget, including the following:

(The one-house budget proposals recently released by Speaker Carl Heastie and Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins make many of these commitments, and they must be fulfilled in the final budget.)

- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates by 10% for hospitals and 20% for nursing homes, with no offsets.
- Restore the \$700 million in safety-net funding, and increase it by an additional \$600 million.
- Address the disparity in reimbursement rates in upstate New York, which are approximately 20% lower than downstate.
- Preserve the investment made last year in Fair Pay for Home Care to stabilize the homecare workforce and undo the drastic proposed cuts to wages for workers employed through the consumer-directed program.
- Raise the minimum wage to \$21.25 by 2027, followed by indexing.

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1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East is the largest and fastest-growing healthcare union in America. We represent over 450,000 nurses and caregivers throughout Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Florida. Our mission is to achieve quality care and good jobs for all.

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