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NEWS RELEASE

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Ontario County Board of Supervisors Urges Governor Cuomo To “Keep the Cap” On Local Medicaid Costs

Canandaigua, NY – March 6, 2020 With a focus on protecting Ontario County taxpayers from being saddled with the burden of funding new Medicaid costs, the Ontario County Board of Supervisors last evening unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the Governor to amend his proposed Executive Budget and the State Legislature to reject a budget recommendation that would remove a cap on local Medicaid costs. Elimination of the cap will result in a \$150 million increase in local taxpayer Medicaid costs which already total \$7.6 billion annually.

Ontario County’s Medicaid costs, which currently total \$16 million per year, will increase by \$1 million under the proposed Executive Budget. This increase could jeopardize non-mandated programs operated by the County, including Road Patrol, Highway Department, and Office for the Aging just to name a few.

Outlined in this year’s Executive Budget proposal are three separate initiatives, referred to collectively as “Medicaid Local District Spending Reforms,” that would impact the local share counties pay in support of the state Medicaid program. The reform package would reverse a zero growth Medicaid cap enacted in 2012 by Governor Cuomo and State lawmakers. The cap is credited with helping counties, including Ontario County, to stabilize and, in several cases, reduce county property tax rate levies.

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“We are opposed to all efforts to undo the local Medicaid caps. A reversal of this state legislation would seriously jeopardize property tax rates and our ability to provide essential services to Ontario County residents and businesses,” said Board of Supervisors Chair John (Jack) Marren. “We urge our leaders in Albany to keep the cap on Medicaid costs.”

Additionally, the reform package includes the interception of Enhanced Federal Medicaid monies (eFMAP). These funds were included in the Affordable Care Act to help all governments that funded the expansion of Medicaid, including our local governments. These funds are worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year to counties and New York City and help local governments maintain compliance under the New York State Real Property Tax Cap by offsetting some of the Medicaid increases already passed down by New York State to local municipalities.

In New York State, county governments are responsible for administering Medicaid rules and regulations set at the state and federal levels. Counties do not control the main drivers impacting Medicaid costs. For example, counties do not have authority to control the cost of prescription drugs, or the ability to set provider reimbursement rates or adjust Medicaid eligibility and benefits.

“Factors that drive Medicaid’s skyrocketing costs are controlled at the state and federal levels. Our residents and businesses should not be expected to shoulder the burden of increased local taxes that will result if the Medicaid cap is removed,” Marren said. “Any change in Medicaid must protect local taxpayers.”

The Board’s adopted resolution, first approved by the Ontario County Health & Human Services and Governmental Operations and Insurance Committees, will be sent to Governor Andrew Cuomo and the region’s representatives in Albany.

Now we need the community’s help! Please contact your State representatives and encourage them to vote no on the “Medicaid Local District Spending Reform” proposal and to work collectively with local municipalities to address the need while protecting our local taxpayers.

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