

ASTORINO'S NEW CORRECTIONAL HEALTH VENDOR COULD COST WESTCHESTER COUNTY MILLIONS

Westchester Medical Center already owes millions to the County

(White Plains, NY) – *In a statement released today, Westchester County Board Chairman Ken Jenkins responds to reports that the Westchester Medical Center will lay off 130 workers due to the cancellation of their current contract with the county to provide health care in the county jail.*

“The Astorino Administration’s decision to move forward with a new vendor contract is not in the best interest of Westchester taxpayers, given that the County Board already cut \$12.5 million dollars from the Medical Center in the 2010 budget. Not only could this cost Westchester 130 jobs but also could cost Westchester millions in lost revenue. The Medical Center should be continue to provide the services to Westchester County without cost to Westchester County until their current contract expires.

The Administration’s extreme actions will not save \$3 million per year as they have claimed, but would save the medical malpractice cost of \$330,000 for one year. Those phantom savings will be dwarfed under the increased cost of corrections officers who will be required to transport inmates for hospital visits.

The Budget and Appropriations Committee of the County Board directed the Finance Department to formally bill the Medical center for \$5.8 million dollars for past years invoices and has not made any payments to the County for 2010. The Medical Center would have received \$14.2 million dollars in 2010 for their corrections contract, which should have been withheld until the County received outstanding invoices from the Medical Center.

In May, the Board was able to secure the Administration's request for the Medical Center to rescind their call to terminate services in July and to continue their work until December 31, 2010 – the original end of their contract.

The Board voted for RFP process, in the attempt to make a decision that was made behind closed doors and open and transparent decision that would get the best cost for Westchester taxpayers. Astorino vetoed openness and transparency and chose to select a company that has set up a New York shell company the week the Astorino administration awarded the contract, over the objections of the Board.

Given the disingenuous tone of the Administration during its deliberations with the Medical Center and its unusual procedures in awarding this sole-sourced contract to a company who has been named in over 140 federal lawsuits due to lack of medical care, serious questions have been raised by Legislators. Westchester County should not pay a dime to another company for correctional health services until the money owed to the people of Westchester is paid back – either through direct payment or services rendered. The Astorino Administration had the leverage to ensure the taxpayers received that money, but chose a path. There needs to be a full vetting of the chosen provider and the full terms of the agreement, so that the people of Westchester are very clear about what's being done...and that tax payers will actually see the savings discussed.”

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Tara L. Martin, Director of Communications
Westchester County Board of Legislators

148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601

Ofc: (914) 995-2016
Fax: (914) 995-3884
Cell: (914) 380-0931

Email: TaraM@westchesterlegislators.com

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