

**HEALTH COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE**  
**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Health Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on Thursday, May 3, 2012 at 2:00 p.m.

**Members Present:**

*Legislator William Spencer - Chair*  
Legislator Kate Browning - Vice-Chair  
Legislator Edward Romaine  
Legislator John Kennedy  
Legislator Sarah Anker

**Also In Attendance:**

*Deputy Presiding Officer Wayne Horsley - District #14*  
*Legislator Tom Muratore - District #4*  
*Legislator DuWayne Gregory - District #15*  
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature  
Sara Simpson - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature  
Barbara LoMoriello - Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature  
Craig Freas - Budget Analyst/Legislative Budget Review Office  
Lora Gellerstein - Aide to Legislator Spencer  
Terry Pearsall - Chief of Staff to Presiding Officer Lindsay  
Michael Pitcher - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay  
Bill Schilling - Aide to Legislator Anker  
Kevin LaValle - Aide to Legislator Muratore  
Ali Nazir - Aide to Legislator Kennedy  
Tom Vaughn - County Executive Assistant  
Sarah Lansdale - Director/Suffolk County Planning Department  
Dr. James Tomarken - Commissioner/SC Department of Health Services  
Margaret Bermel - Director of Health Administration/DHS  
Bob DeLagi - Acting Director of Emergency Medical Services/DHS  
Walter Dawydiak - Acting Director of Environmental Quality Division/DHS  
Geri Rosser - Hydrogeologist-Environmental Quality Div/DHS  
Richard Meyer - Association of Municipal Employees  
Kathy Malloy - Association of Municipal Employees  
Mary Finnin - Public Health Nursing in Suffolk County  
Martin Trent - Retired SC Department of Health Services Employee  
Joan Schweitzer - Bureau of Epidemiology & Disease Control/DHS  
Mona Ramjas - Director-Bureau of Public Health Nursing/DHS  
Anne Roden - Bureau of Public Health Nursing-/Dept of Health Services  
Ronnie Levy - Bureau of Public Health Nursing/Dept of Health Services  
Jean Wright - Patient Care Services Division/Dept of Health Services  
Sandra Siegel - Public Health Nurse Coordinator/Stony Brook Hospital  
Maria Bune - Bureau of Public Health Nursing/Dept of Health Services  
Robin Blocker - Nutritionist-WIC Program/Department of Health Services  
Adrienne Esposito - Citizens Campaign for the Environment  
All Other Interested Parties.

**Minutes Taken By:**

Alison Mahoney - Court Reporter

*(\*The meeting was called to order at 4:42 P.M. \*)*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

If you are part of the committee, please take a seat, we are going to start. I would ask if we could stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, to be led by Legislator Anker.

***Salutation***

If you're not here for the Health Committee, I'm going to ask if you could please take the side conversations outside to the lobby. Thank you. I want to definitely be considerate.

I do apologize. For those who came for the Health Committee, the committee is starting three hours late. But we know -- we have some very, very important issues when we're talking about people's livelihood, so whatever time is necessary we shall spend.

I have a number of public speakers and we're going to get right into it. The first public speaker is Martin Trent, and on deck will be Joan Schweitzer.

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

Martin Trent left.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Martin left. Is Joan still here?

**MS. SCHWEITZER:**

Yes.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Okay, Joan. Is it Schweitzer? Okay. Thank you for coming.

**MS. SCHWEITZER:**

The Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Control represents the 1.5 million residents of Suffolk County. H1N1, Pandemic flu, E-Coli 0157, Lyme Disease, Pertussis, Neisseria Meningitis, Salmonella, Measles are just some of the 70 mandated diseases we fully grant-funded nurses investigate and manage daily. Without adequate staff, people will die. And since there are so few nurses now with two Public Health Nurses being laid off, me being one of them, in our department of five Public Health Nurses, the citizens will want to know where we are when the next disaster strikes.

Right now, one may think all is quiet. No recent reports of MSRA, Pandemic Flu, no Taco Bells are causing illness, but right now there is an epidemic of pertussis, also known as whooping cough, in our County that we have not seen in a long time. One infant from our County died last year. One may say, "Wow, that's good, only one." Well, one is one too many, especially for the parents of that child. We have worked tirelessly and quietly in our department to keep this epidemic from killing any more innocent victims that cross its path. We as nurse epidemiologists, who happen to have the same title as nurses that do home care, are highly trained to investigate and provide disease control in our County. We guide and educate hospitals, adult care facilities, schools, camps, businesses and, most important, individuals in disease surveillance and outbreak control for diseases that are communicable and could be deadly.

Many times these diseases make headlines and we are the bureau to which the public is directed. With such a skeletal staff, questions will go unanswered as there will be no one to calm the public. Staff will be frantically trying to prioritize, and of course frantic phone calls will then go to newspapers. We will go backwards. Our safety is at risk.

While the remaining staff are dedicated and capable, their ability to maintain current high standards of disease control to protect the 1.5 million residents of Suffolk County will be compromised. Prolonged morbidity and increased mortality will be the result. Again, these are fully grant-funded positions doing mandated disease control that are being eliminated.

I must also point out that these same nurses are also specially trained in emergency preparedness and are constantly doing surveillance for bio-terrorism activity 24/7. This entailed much training over the years with Homeland security and FEMA to be able to provide the adequate needed protection of the 1.5 million citizens in this County. This is not an area where it can afford to lose staff, it is already half of what it was five years ago. I feel this has to be said as I fear for the citizens of the County which include my own family.  
Thank you.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you. Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Anne Roden. Is she still here?

**MS. RODEN:**

Yes.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Okay. And on deck is Gerri Rosser.

**MS. RODEN:**

Okay. Good afternoon, or maybe I should say good evening. My name is Anne Roden. I am one of the 315. I am currently a Public Health Nurse within the Sexually Transmitted Disease Unit. We have lost three Public Health Nurse positions, one AIDS Counselor position and two Clerk Typists, more than half of our staff. I would like to share with you a few cases that demonstrate the importance and necessity of these jobs to the public health of Suffolk County, your constituents.

Several years ago there was a well published case of a man in his mid-30's with HIV that prayed on young children. He exposed them to STD's and HIV, which is a lifelong, potentially deadly virus. The STD Unit was crucial in identifying and notifying these victims and getting them in for testing, medical care and preventative treatment. This man was ultimately convicted.

Recently we had a patient diagnosed with an infectious case of syphilis. Neurological symptoms were present, the provider did not feel it was necessary to do further testing and provided the patient with the basic treatment for early syphilis. We recommended to the patient that he get a second opinion and we facilitated another consult which resulted in additional testing. This testing indicated syphilis in the brain, and the patient required additional treatment. This treatment was also facilitated by the STD Unit. We saved this patient from having permanent neurological damage.

We had an 11-year old young girl exposed to chlamydia by her 6th grade boyfriend. We worked with her physician to get her properly tested and treated. Without our intervention, this young girl may have developed Pelvic Inflammatory Disease and/or infertility. Over 50% of chlamydia cases have no signs or symptoms.

We receive specialized training from the CDC. You cannot move another person into this position without the cost of additional training which is mandated by the CDC. And this training is not just a webinar.

I had to travel to Boston for two weeks. The grants that fund our department require that certain criteria are met and met in a timely manner.

This reduction in the workforce will essentially prevent us from meeting these mandates and these grants may be lost, leaving the County to spend more money to provide the disease surveillance and investigations that are required by law.

Currently we receive funding of just under \$299,000. We do field work throughout the County, from Montauk to Amityville, north shore, south shore, even to Fire Island. We go to people's homes, schools, clinics, doctors appointments in an effort to make sure everyone is appropriately treated and notified of their exposure to these potentially debilitating and costly infections, and these infections cross all socio-economic lines.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

I need you to wrap it up. I appreciate your comments.

**MS. RODEN:**

Okay, I'll be quick. Yeah, we've had physicians, CEO'S with syphilis, 11-year olds with chlamydia and we're seeing a spike in gonorrhea in the County. We provide community outreach. I just think in the long run we'll end up costing the County money and adversely affecting the public health of your constituents. Thank you for your time and attention. And if you have any questions, I'll be happy to address them.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

A quick question.

**MS. RODEN:**

Yes.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

If I may?

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Mr. Romaine?

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

You investigated about 9,000 cases?

**MS. RODEN:**

Yes.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

You reported about forty-three, forty-four hundred cases to the State of New York; is that correct?

**MS. RODEN:**

That's correct.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

You are losing three Public Health Nurses, two Clerk Typists and an AIDS Counselor?

**MS. RODEN:**

Yes. We had lost one Clerk Typist through attrition. The one remaining Clerk Typist we have got a letter, so there will be no clerical staff in the office.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Now, are any of these staff members that are being let go, are they funded by Article 6 or by other grant funding?

**MS. RODEN:**

Yes. My position is 65% funded by a grant. Another Public Health Nurse position is also 65% funded by the grant.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

So let me understand this; if we lay these people off, we're not saving 100% of their salaries and benefits, we're saving only maybe 35%; is that correct? Is that a fair statement?

**MS. RODEN:**

That's exactly right, yes.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

So how much -- and maybe this is to Budget Review -- are we saving by letting these people go? I assume the emphasis is on savings and not layoffs.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Well, what I'd like --

**MR. FREAS:**

Let me put it like this. In the review last year and in our briefings to the Working Group, we emphasized that the revenues in the budget in the Department of Health Services were overstated. And in addition to that, and I believe you and I had a conversation during the budget process last year on the record about this and our opinion of the Budget Office's estimates versus ours, that the revenues were overstated and they did not adjust downwards in anticipation of the layoffs. That remains the case.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

That was Mr. Levy's budget, is that --

**MR. FREAS:**

Yes, Sir.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

That's correct.

**MR. FREAS:**

But it's also the budget that we substantially adopted with respect to personnel.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

So in the budget we adopted we said, "Okay, we're going to lay these people off. But guess what? All the monies we get for State revenue for these people we're still going to get, even though they're not there."

**MR. FREAS:**

The revenues were not adjusted in the budget.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

I will not impinge upon my colleague's Legislative right to inquire. What I'm going to ask if we can do, as this is the public portion and I know I have some people that have been waiting for three hours, I'm looking at my cards --

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Doctor, I'm finished. Thank you again. I just want to point out, I guess what we have to do is weigh dollars over here and health risk over here, and somewhere hopefully that scale balances like the scale of justice. But I don't know, it seems like someone has their thumb on the scale these days. Thank you.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Legislator Romaine, you are absolutely correct and I agree with you. And I do want those comments, but I know that --

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

I understand.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

-- the cards that are coming are going to have similar comments and then we can discuss it if we get everyone to get a chance on the record. So thank you so much, I appreciate that.

And again, I understand what you are saying, I'm going to make some comments with regards to that and that we can't -- we have to make these difficult decisions, not just looking at dollars and cents, but we're not even looking at the dollars and cents in some cases. So we have to do this in a logical fashion and we cannot -- how do you put a price on health? So, thank you. I do appreciate that.

**MS. RODEN:**

Thank you.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Gerri Rosser, and Shane Fitzpatrick is on deck. Hi, Geri.

**MS. ROSSER:**

Hi. Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak. As some of you know, I'm a Hydrogeologist with Health Services. I'm here again today to try to make the Legislators, the Administration and the general public aware of what the Office of Pollution Control does and the vital role we play in protecting the groundwater and public health.

The Office of Pollution Control is made up of engineers, inspectors, enforcement staff, clerical, and of course myself, the hydrogeologist. We ensure that underground storage tanks are properly installed, we review environmental site assessments and inspect commercial and industrial facilities to determine if they are -- they have a illegally discharge and evaluate any and all associated environmental and health impacts. There are no other regulatory units at the County, State or Federal level that perform this function. As a result of our inspections, in one year, 1,412,766 gallons of contaminated waste and 11,517 tons of contaminated soil were removed from the subsurface material that would have served as a source of groundwater contamination, not for decades but centuries, and we do this every year.

I perform a unique role in the office in that I am the only hydrogeologist serving on the front line ensuring that these sites are investigated and remediated in a manner that protects groundwater. I have the responsibility to ensure that as a result of illegal discharges to the subsurface, the contaminants do not find their way to the more than eleven hundred public supply wells and the 47,000 private wells that exist in Suffolk County, or don't get eventually discharged to the Peconic

Estuary, the South Shore Estuary and the Long Island Sound. We are the first line of groundwater protection and restoration. And addressing these sites quickly and early on, public health risks are reduced.

Without our services, which have already been -- some of them have already been eliminated, there will be more plumes like Oser Avenue and Lawrence Aviation, more brownfield sites and more contamination discharging into our bays and estuaries, and the results of some of our efforts, water resources can better perform their function of groundwater investigation and monitoring. And it's not just exposure to drinking water. We need to be concerned about as a result of groundwater contaminated -- groundwater contaminated with chlorinated solvents, there's a potential for toxic vapors to migrate into indoor air. I've personally been involved in the installation of soil vapor mitigation systems at strip centers, commercial facilities and a day-care facility.

A small percentage of my time is allocated to the review of new day-care facility applications. My function is to determine if there are any potential environmental concerns or threats related to that property that can affect a sensitive population. Prior to my involvement, the applicant simply signed a statement that said to the best of their knowledge, there are no known environmental concerns. The applicant is a businessperson, not an environmental professional with the expertise to make such an assessment. This task involves the evaluation of findings of a scientific and technical nature, and unfortunately our experience to date is that will be a potential health concern related to a groundwater plume that needs to be evaluated.

The aforementioned task that required a review of groundwater data, groundwater investigation reports and a complete understanding of the County's groundwater resources in an aquifer system require an advanced degree in environmental field. I have a Master's Degree in Hydrogeology, a Bachelor's in Engineering, I have 22 years experience; no one in the County has those credentials. There is no one else in my office that can perform my job. There is no amount of cross-training that can compensate for the loss of my position. Please understand that the Office of Pollution Control serves a vital role in the protecting -- in protecting the County's drinking water, our estuaries and bays and key to pollution prevention through the services we provide. Abolishing my position will severely diminish the County's ability to be proactive in the groundwater protection. A coworker and a friend of mine --

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Gerri, I'm sorry, you have to wrap it up. Your time is up.

**MS. ROSSER:**

I will wrap it up. Has a sticker on his cabinet that says, *"We have not inherited this land from our ancestors, we are borrowing it from our children."* I'm afraid what condition that land will be in when it's time to hand it back. I thank you very much. And if you have --

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you.

*Applause*

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Mr. Chairman, a quick question. Gerri, thank you for all you do for the County of Suffolk. As you know, you were included in my resolution that would restore the positions that was tabled at committee, unfortunately. I've changed and amended that resolution to change the funding source so that all the unit will be funded out of 477. I've asked the County Executive for a Certificate of Necessity so it can be voted on next Tuesday. At the very worst, if it can't be voted on, if I don't get the Certificate of Necessity, it will be laid on the table and will come up for a meeting at the first meeting in June.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Is there a question?

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

But I will not -- I wanted you to know that because I will not stop working to save yourself and the other well drillers. Water quality is at risk in this County. Thank you.

**MS. ROSSER:**

Thank you.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you, Mr. Romaine. Thank you, Gerri. And I appreciate and value what you do and your points are well taken. Thank you.

Mr. Fitzpatrick, is he still here? Is Richard Amper here, Long Island Pine Barrens; is he still here?

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

No.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Adrienne Esposito?

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

Here.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

She's here.

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

Before my timing starts, I would like to submit this.

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

Good afternoon or evening, whatever it is. My name is Adrienne Esposito, I'm the Executive Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment. I also am here to talk about the dangers to our drinking water quality and quantity under the current budget cuts.

I'm not going to tell you anything you don't know, you're all intelligent people. We have drinking water on Long Island of which a hundred percent comes from underground. Unfortunately, every single one of you has toxic waste in your district. Legislator Browning, for instance, granddaddy of them all, has, you know, pesticides, has a compost facility emanating radionuclides and very high heavy metals, particularly Manganese, which has not been delineated. Legislator Anker, you have chlorinated solvents, of which you're well familiar with. Legislator Romaine, I'm not even going to begin to delineate what you have in your district.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

We can start with Grumman.

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

Yes, we can, and that's a big one. And Legislator Spencer, you have nitrates above drinking water standards, up to 12 and 13 parts per million. You all are impacted by this. Who will protect the water? Who will tell us where the contamination is, where it's going and what wells are safe and not safe? This is an essential question. People on Long Island and in Suffolk County have the right to

expect clean, safe drinking water. It's not always going to work, but it's going to work if we could at least be out there, drill the wells and test them.

Who will do it? Well, you know that the vast majority of people may be hooked up to public water, but what you might not know is how many private wells do we have? Anybody know? I'll tell you. Over 47,000 private wells which service over 200,000 members of Suffolk County. Who will test their wells? Right now the County does that once a year for a nominal fee of a hundred. But if we don't have the staff and we don't have the well drillers and we don't have the heavy equipment operators, we're not going to be doing that. Who will test the community supply wells, of which we have 273? Who will do this? Who will examine the toxic waste sites across Long Island when we find them, because we continue to find them. Who will delineate those plumes? These are real needs, these are real consequences to the actions.

I want to just say really quickly that you've read in the newspaper, as I have, some of the comments from the Health Department, some of which said, "*We will maintain our work.*" Really? Really, Legislators? With 40% less people, they're going to maintain the work? I can't do that --

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Absolutely not.

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

-- in my operation. Are you going to be able to maintain your level of work if your staff was fired, for your constituency? I don't think so. So let's not lie to the public. Let's not mislead them. Let's tell them what's going to happen and not happen. Because at the very least, if we can't protect them, let's tell them the truth. It upsets me to read, "*We're just going to retrain people.*" Really? Really, Legislators? We're going to retrain people to be hydrogeologists; really?

*(\*Laughter\*)*

I don't think so. We're not going to do that. Let's talk about what we're not going to do and what we are going to do, and let's -- I know that this is crazy. I know you've heard it all day long, and I wouldn't want to wear your shoes for any amount of tea in China.

*(\*Laughter\*)*

And I know it's hard. But there are basic essentials, like drinking water, that we need, we expect, it's not a luxury item. So we want to work with you to figure out how to solve it, we need to get it together, get hydrogeologists, well drillers and laborers back in the County so we can do the basic job of protecting clean water -- protecting drinking water and make sure it's clean and safe for the members of the public. Thank you for your time.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you, Adrienne.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

One question.

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

I'm sorry.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Adrienne, could you call Mr. Bellone and ask him for a Certificate of Necessity so we can vote to restore these jobs next Tuesday?

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

Yes.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you.

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

Any other loaded questions?

*(\*Laughter\*)*

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

All my questions are loaded.

*(\*Laughter\*)*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you, Adrienne. Actually, societies have actually ended historically because of the drinking water source coming to an end.

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

That's right.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

So this is more important than you can ever imagine. So thank you.

**MS. ESPOSITO:**

Thank you, Legislator Spencer.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Our next speaker is Maria Bunn? Bune? Thank you. And Robin Blocker is next. Maria?

**MS. BUNE:**

Good evening. I'm sorry, I had to read that instruction there. I'm supposed to keep it on hold while I talk?

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

You have to hold it the whole time.

**MS. BUNE:**

Thank you. Good evening again. My name is Maria Bune and I'm a Public Health Nurse.

First of all, I would like to thank you for allowing me this uninterrupted three minutes time to speak with you about my job as a PHN. I have been a PHN for 16 years. And in this time, I have watched my department decrease from over a hundred field nurses to now less than ten. In this 16 years time, I was part of nursing that you all know work to save the lives of those underserved population living in Suffolk County. Numerous times my colleagues have stood up in front of you with examples

of how Public Health Nurses work to save lives, and I could testify to you many more incidences in which I have observed that the Public Health Nurses work to do -- the Public Health Nurses' work do save the lives of the people in our community, your neighbors and your families.

I also know that you are aware that my department's work was proven to save the County money by preventing unnecessary emergency room visits and hospitalizations. If you would like any additional information on this, I am sure that this can be provided upon request to my department.

Another change that has been made in Public Health Nursing since I've started working was the shift from free work to more billable work in which now allows us to get reimbursement for our services which, in turn, actually makes the County money. We also have documentation of this upon request.

By cutting ten of our field nurses, we no longer safely -- we can no longer safely save the lives of your constituents as well as save the County money and make money to keep us afloat. I ask that you reconsider this list and save our program, because no one else will be able to do the job that our Public Health Nurses can do.

I leave with you this thought. Public Health Nurses service the population in Suffolk County who no one else wants to help. Each and every one of your town and villages have these underserved families. Who will service them when all ten of our field nurses are gone?  
Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

I have question for from you Legislator Browning.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Good evening. Thank you for coming. I certainly applaud you for what you do because a nurse is not something I would have the stomach for. Curiosity; are you an LPN, RN?

**MS. BUNE:**

I'm actually a Master's Degree nurse, I'm a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, but I decided to stay for 16 years because I believe in this program.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Okay. Just out of curiosity, in the event that we wouldn't be able to restore your positions, we have over 60 agency nurses at John J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility. Would you be qualified, or is that something, say, rather than lay you off, be able to transfer you over to the John J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility; is that something that you could do?

**MS. BUNE:**

Well, as a nurse, as a registered nurse, we are qualified to care for patients. But we are -- I've been specialized for 16 years in doing field Public Health Nursing visits, and who else would visit those patients when no one else would offer to? And that's what my speciality is.

*Applause*

**LEG. BROWNING:**

No, I understand. But if you -- I'm just hypothetically asking if, in fact, your job could not be restored, like I said, we have agency nurses at John J. Foley. You know, I don't see -- if we have so many nurses in the County being laid off, I don't want to see you be laid off, I want to see you somewhere. And John J --

**MS. BUNE:**

I'm sorry.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Okay.

**MS. BUNE:**

No disrespect to the nurses in John J. Foley, but our training is completely different and more versed in a variety of work that we do for the community. And what really I am fighting for in standing here before you --

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Right.

**MS. BUNE:**

-- is for the families that no one else wants. We are the very last people that they call for the families in your villages and towns.

So I want to say, no disrespect to the nurses at John J. Foley, we are over qualified for John J. Foley.

*Applause*

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Okay, that's why I asked. Thank you.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Quick question.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Yes, Legislator Romaine.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Most of the patients that are served by Public Health Nurses tend to be elderly, infirmed and poor?

**MS. BUNE:**

Poor.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Poor.

**MS. BUNE:**

But not just elderly, we service babies, children, mothers, families.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Right. And when these services are taken away, the elderly might -- may not be able to live on their own, may go to assisted living, may go to nursing homes. Since we're on the hook for about a quarter of Medicare and Medicaid, our bills are going to go up. Where would children and families go without -- where would they go?

**UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

The nearest grave yard.

**MS. BUNE:**

They will go to the emergency rooms and then there goes your budget.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

And there goes -- because, again, there's short-term and long-term. Short-term you may see a savings; long-term, it's all going to come back to bite you because these are Medicaid and Medicare patients, by and large, which we are on the hook for about a quarter of that. And that bill is going to go up expedientially when they go to nursing homes, assisted livings, emergency rooms to seek access to health care that is no longer available. Thank you very much.

*Applause*

**MS. BUNE:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Okay. The next six speakers are our public regarding the Public Health Nurses. Actually, Robin Blocker speaking with regards to WIC, Women, Infants & Children.

**MS. BLOCKER:**

My name is Robin Blocker and I work for the Department of -- I work for the Department of Health Services' WIC Program in the capacity of Nutritionist and Breast Feeding Coordinator. I'm here to represent our program and I want to give you a little background.

WIC is a special supplemental nutritional program for women, infants and children. Suffolk County Department of Health Services, one of the local agencies who, for over 30 years, have provided health supporting benefits to over -- to now over 17,000 low income participants in the following categories; pregnant women, post-partum breast-feeding women, post-partum non breast-feeding women, infants and children up to the age of five years who are at nutritional risk. Our program spans a wide area in Suffolk County with offices in Amityville, Wyandanch, Brentwood, Greenlawn, Coram, Patchogue, Shirley, Riverhead and Southampton. Participants receive monthly food vouchers known as WIC checks that are cashed in retail grocery stores and supermarkets. A wide variety of food, such as milk, eggs, cheese, tofu, cereal, whole grain bread, brown rice, tortillas, beans, peanut butter, fresh fruits and vegetables and juice, formula and baby food are provided to support optimal nutrition and this positively impacts health.

Suffolk County Department of Health Services' WIC Program is 100% Federally funded. Suffolk County has abolished nine WIC positions to save money, approximately 25% of our staff. There is no cost to the County to cover these positions; therefore, there's no reason to abolish them. If these positions were to be covered by some chance, we would still need to have three Registered Dietitians, three to four Dietetic Technicians and two Spanish-Speaking Clerk Typists.

Already this decision has negatively impacted our program operations and our WIC participants, mainly because the WIC Program is continuous and we work in three months in advance of everybody else. So for example, the next available appointment for participants is in August; our July schedules are already intact. So if you do replace such positions, which I can find difficult because there are no other Registered Dietitians and no other Dietetic Technicians in Suffolk County's staffing, we would have to take those people and try to train them which takes almost two months to do. It will impact on our program and cause a collapse in services.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

I'm sorry. Your time is up, I need you to wrap it up.

**MS. BLOCKER:**

Okay. I'm so sorry.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

No, that's quite alright.

**MS. BLOCKER:**

My question is why completely abolish positions that do not cost the County anything and needlessly send employees to unemployment for no reason. And we ask that all abolished positions be restored as soon as possible. Thank you for your attention.

*Applause*

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Quick question.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

You're absolutely correct. Legislator Kennedy.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Okay. Thank you very much. First of all, thank you for the work that you do. I know about the WIC program firsthand from many, many years ago. My recollection is that you work with expectant mothers and mothers who have just delivered?

**MS. BLOCKER:**

Yes.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

And have benefits provided for children up to age --

**MS. BLOCKER:**

Five.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Yes. And it's a very specialized diet, I guess, that's provided?

And as a matter of fact, the WIC checks, if I recall, can only purchase certain commodities, all of which are basically formula, high nutrient cereals, things that are all basically designed to provide proper nutrition for both mother and the children.

**MS. BLOCKER:**

Exactly. And of course when the WIC dollars go up by the Federal government, the Medicaid dollars always go down. It's an inverse relationship that's, you know, been documented. That's the reason why WIC is always supported.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

So referrals come to you in one of the various sites that you have throughout the County and it's income eligibility, and then I guess based on the fact that folks fit into those criteria.

**MS. BLOCKER:**

Correct.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Okay. It's going to sound like a stupid question, but I've been known to ask them before and I'll ask them again. What would happen if you weren't there to go ahead and provide this for these women and children.

**MS. BLOCKER:**

Well, what happens, generally speaking, it affects pregnancy outcomes, that's the reason why WIC works. Because people are at nutritional risk, and when you go on the WIC Program you effect those risks positively. So what happens, we have bigger babies and less babies in the NICU Unit and so on and so forth, that's why WIC is successful.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Sometimes infants are put on specialized formulas.

**MS. BLOCKER:**

That is correct, like NeoSure.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

And WIC covers that as well?

**MS. BLOCKER:**

Correct. One month of NeoSure would cost a thousand dollars. And knocking our program down when we are 100% fully-funded, it doesn't seem to be saving money because we don't cost money.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Through the Chair, if I can. I appreciate the testimony of the speaker, but I just wanted to ask through BRO to confirm.

**MR. FREAS:**

That's correct. The WIC grant covers the entire cost of the program, including the program, the benefits associated with the program.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

So there are nine people being let go from the department and the savings that would be realized to the County of Suffolk is what?

**MR. FREAS:**

That would be -- there would be no savings associated directly with the layoff of the anybody from the WIC program.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

To my colleague, I actually found this out. And we've already introduced a budget amendment to address the issue, and we don't have to find the offset because the offset's already there. So we'll be moving that forward.

**MR. FREAS:**

That -- excuse me, Dr. Spencer, that's not correct.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Okay.

**MR. FREAS:**

Again, as I mentioned earlier, because the revenue was not removed from the budget when the budget was passed, even though the layoffs were at least implicit at the six month period in the recommended budget, they were implicit at January 1st. You're still going to need an offset.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

How can that be?

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

How can that be? That makes no sense to me. I apologize. Help me out here.

**MR. FREAS:**

The budget that we passed in October, November did not remove the revenues associated with the layoffs. We read about this at the time in our review of the recommended budget and we did not further adjust revenues in the Department of Health Services after some of the positions were returned. They were funded through a different mechanism for the first six months of the year, but there is still an implicit deficit because you have more expenses than the revenues that were put in the budget in the first place. We discussed this again at some length in the recommended review for Health Services.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Legislator Romaine.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

First of all, I appreciate Craig's explanation, but it just shows you where accounting sometimes leads. Suffice it to say -- and I will ask this question, if I may, again -- there are nine positions that serve Women, Infants & Children.

**MS. BLOCKER:**

Yes. Two of --

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

That are 100% funded, that if eliminated will not produce one cent of savings for this County; is that correct?

**MS. BLOCKER:**

That is correct.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

I hope the goal of this Administration is not layoffs but savings. And when it can be shown that savings are not going to be accomplished by an action that will imperil health, particularly of those of limited income, that they will move to strike this, because this is wrong by any stretch of the imagination. And governments are no different than people, they have a moral imperative and we are acting against our moral imperative. I sat --

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

I share your outrage.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

I sat in that seat in the 80's and next to me, the guy that told me about moral imperatives, was John J. Foley, and he spoke for public health. And I learned a great deal from him in my time in this Legislature and now I'm back again and I have to tell you, he would be dismayed. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you. We have to move.

*Applause*

Thank you, Legislator Romaine. I share your outrage, but we have to -- I'm going to ask if my colleagues, just during the public portion, we can let the public -- we can refrain from our commentary, because I have a big commentary I want to give on this and then we'll get back to it. So I'm going to respect what I'm asking my colleague to do and move on with our -- the next six

speakers are Public Health Nursing related, Patricia Schecher, then Gale Samuels, Ronnie Levy and then Sandra Siegel,

**MS. SCHECHER:**

Thank you very much. My name is Pat Schecher and I've been proud to be a Public Health Nurse for 38 years. I guess I'm one of those ones on the old end, you all were talking about trying to get out. So I'm really (*laughter*) -- I'm actually not on the list, I guess, because I'm so old and have been around for so long. I'm really here today because I respect very much this body. I have spoken before this body in the past and I have some really grave concerns. My grave concerns aren't really about myself, about the whole program and what's really going to be lost to our County.

Right now a total of 15 Public Health Nurses have been given letters. We're from a couple of different divisions of the bureau -- of the Division of Health, but I'm actually the Bureau of Public Health Nursing, STD, you heard from the other nurses. We work collaboratively in the sense that we all take care of your constituents. We do work in specialized, different areas, so I could not really easily go and do Joan's job, whereas Ann Roden went for a two week training. You know, it -- you really need to understand the ramifications of what's being lost. There's ten field nurses in the Bureau of Public Health Nursing who have received letters. A couple of us old ones, I'm a Supervisor, a coordinator, we'll have nobody to supervise and coordinate because the service is going to be lost and these services are ones that are not done by the private sector.

Quickly, I know I only have a couple of minutes. In thinking of what I would say last night, I just had to think of what the referrals were the last three or four weeks -- three or four days, actually. Fourteen years I've had babies, they're not getting skilled nurses in other places, premature babies with colostomies, Spanish-speaking mothers living in basements that really aren't sophisticated enough to negotiate the health care system and need intervention from Public Health Nursing. We work collaboratively with APS and CPS, so people say, "Okay. You know, we've got those other institutions of the County for children that need protection and adults." Actually, I've had cases where the nurses there on the front lines are finding out the information to help the CPS worker figure out what she's going to do. Adult Protective Services, we had a patient just two weeks ago with a communicable disease that needed mental health, a man had mental illness, they could not help him, APS could not get in for a couple of days, Public Health Nursing is called just to make sure he does a treatment so then the other services can kick in. So when they say it's -- there's not a need in the private sector, it really isn't really the case.

We talk about gangs in the Police Department. I have my tax bill, I was going to give you my whole tax bill, obviously you guys know. I mean, I live in St. James, \$63 is my -- my taxes are \$11,000, \$63 is the General Fund of the County. In a County like Suffolk, I can't believe we can't find other ways to offset these vital services, and I know you agree with me but we need to look at it.

Okay, one more quick thing about gangs and the Police. You know, we restructured the Police Departments to hit the areas that have all the gangs and all the problems. We're seeing the girlfriends, the babies, the families of these gangs and are right on the field knowing the towns, the zip codes, I know they spoke earlier about the zip codes. So please -- Nassau County was saying, you know, invest in kids and fight crime. Kathleen Rice, the DA of Nassau County, in just the paper the other day, is saying that they have to get home visitation back, family nurse partnership is a new thing. It's all packaged different ways, it's what you guys have, we've had it for the last 30 years and it's vital now more than ever. Thank you.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you. Gale Samuels.

**MS. SAMUELS:**

Good evening. I am not Gale Samuels. My name is Mona Ramjas, I'm the Director of the Bureau of Public Health Nursing. Gale had to leave and she asked me to read her statement; is that okay?

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

If you can do it in two minutes and 47 seconds (*laughter*). Yes it's okay. Please, it's very important. Go right ahead.

**MS. RAMJAS:**

Gale is one of the members of my Bureau that's being laid off; she wrote this note to you, all of you:

*"To whom this may concern;*

*I, Gale Samuels, Home Health Aide of Suffolk County, am expressing my feelings regarding my pink slip to which I received on Friday, April 27, 2012. Actions such as a layoff from my job is being performed and I feel that I've committed myself and dedicated myself for 30 years to this County. I have been very respectful to my clients and my superiors. My job has been a big part of my life. I have always enjoyed what I've done, caring for those in need of my service. I am feeling very slighted because now I'm close to retirement. I need one more year to benefit -- to earn my benefits for my retirement. I am asking that you give this great thought in my position and get me reinstated or place me somewhere in the County to fulfill my position. Yours truly, Gale Samuels."*

**LEG. BROWNING:**

All done.

**MS. RAMJAS:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you. Thank you very much.

*Applause*

I'm sorry that -- Gale was here earlier and she had to go because we started late; is that correct, she was here?

**MS. RAMJAS:**

Yeah, she was here two-and-a-half hours.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Please pass on our apologies and thank you for her statement.  
Ronnie Levy?

**MS. LEVY:**

Hi. Just a comment on what Mona said. I sent all of you an e-mail yesterday about Gale Samuel's situation.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

I got it.

**MS. LEVY:**

She had worked as a CNA at John J. Foley when it was the Infirmary. But since a CNA position was upgraded to a Grade 9 and she is currently a Grade 8, she cannot be bumped back; that's a sad

situation.

I'm Ronnie Levy, I'm one of the Supervisors of the Riverhead Office of the Bureau of Public Health Nursing. I have met with many of you over the past year in our efforts to maintain the Bureau and continue the desperately needed services that our field nurses provide. I'm not going to repeat what you've already heard many times, about the services that the most vulnerable populations in Suffolk County will lose as a result of the current layoffs within the Bureau and the possible elimination of the department. The cost to the County of increased premature births, sick children rehospitalized or taken to the emergency rooms, newborns going through withdrawal, both from legal and illegal drugs; you've heard it all before.

I am a nurse. We in the Bureau have chosen a career in caring for others. We are not economists nor financial analysts. We care for our patients, we care for our staff. We care for the vulnerable adults, children and infants in each of your communities. People allow us into their homes where we daily witness lives of quiet heroism. Elderly spouses attempting to care for each other, mothers with newborns and children who haven't had the opportunities that life has afforded each of us in this room, pregnant women living in sad and deplorable conditions. You don't see them, you never will; they are the invisible and voiceless population of this great County of Suffolk.

Our nurses will get other jobs, they're in demand, for there's no better experience than that of a Public Health Nurse. Life does go on. We will readjust our plans and goals, ride out the changes and cope.

I am not proud of a County that turns its back on the most vulnerable. We're only as strong as the weakest amongst us. I am not proud of the decision that was made last Friday, though I understand the circumstances are apparently dire. This is a sad turn for the County of Suffolk and each and every one of its residents.

### *Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you. Our next speaker Sandra Siegel. Mary Finnin's on deck.

**MS. FINNIN:**

Save the best for last.

**MS. SIEGEL:**

My name is Sandra Siegel.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

You have to hold the button.

**MS. SIEGEL:**

Oh, I have to hold the button. My name is Sandra Siegel, I'm the Public Health Nurse Coordinator at Stony Brook Hospital. The people that I send out from Stony Brook to the Public Health Nursing Bureau are mothers who in this age of drugs and pregnant women being addicted, mothers of babies who are addicted, mothers with psychiatric problems, babies who were born at 23, 24, 26 weeks and when they go home and are at risk for developmental delay. And we do have the program, the I-Chat Program where we visit them periodically, these very vulnerable babies, to measure their developmental stages as they grow, and this kind of a one-to-one experience with a mother is very valuable. And when I do describe what it is we can offer, they are -- they are mostly very anxious to have this service. And as I said, many of them are from very low income, emotionally disturbed women, psychiatric diagnosis who are going home with their babies, and we are able to provide a nurse to kind of ease them into that, the home situation.

We also are the only agency that serves the pediatric problem -- children. I gave you something from Stony Brook Social Work Services. They recognize that we are the agency of last resort because no other agency goes to see babies all over Suffolk County. We go from Montauk to Lindenhurst and we -- they are devastated that they won't have our services to fall back on for these vulnerable people. Thank you.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you. Mary?

**MS. FINNIN:**

Thank you and good afternoon. My name is Mary Finnin, I'm a retired Public Health Nurse. I was the HIV Primary Care Nurse Coordinator for Suffolk County Department of Health.

I don't want to repeat some of the statements that were made here today, but I do want to say, does anyone really believe that the \$500 million deficit is because we give care to the poor, the uninsured and the unemployed? The biggest hit in terms of layoffs and reductions have been services to the public, mainly women, children and minorities, because that's who we're servicing, whether it's in our clinics, in public health community services, our drug clinics or wherever. I did want to, you know, backup the positions in terms of the Public Health Nurses in the community. I was -- worked for the County for 20 years and I saw those numbers go from a hundred down to 15, and we're servicing one of the biggest geographic areas, you know, in the State. When these positions are not filled, private sector is not going to pick up these cases, they're high risk. A nurse is a nurse is a nurse is what I'm hearing here, saying that, well, you can just take this specialized Public Health Nurse with a Master's Degree, a Nurse Practitioner, and just -- *"Well, there's another position over here, you can just flip them."* These nurses are specially trained, many are multi-lingual, they have advanced degrees and they specialize in the service that they provide. Suffolk County has won awards for the prevention of HIV and Hepatitis in children because of the work of mothers and children that have been done through the years through Public Health Nursing. When we're in the clinics and we have a patients that don't follow-up and they're high risk AIDS patients, other patients with communicable diseases, it's the Public Health Nurses that we call to go out and make these visits. That's what saves the patients and it saves you money because we're not dealing with further contamination in the community with infectious diseases and we're not having to see these high risk babies without proper care come into for delivery in our hospitals.

I think that we have an absolute responsibility to fund the core services. I was going to speak to WIC because I've worked with the WIC staff and they're completely funded positions. It's a no-brainer, there is no reason to cut those positions. There's no reason, in my mind and in my bias, to cut health positions, because health is a core mission of this County and we should get the same respect and consideration as the cops and the Sheriffs get because that's where they put all the money.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you, Mary.

**MS. FINNIN:**

Okay. I just want to say that I agree, the smallest portion of our taxes is the General Fund for Suffolk County. I would double those taxes happily and see that the services stayed and that the people aren't unemployed which means we need to provide more services for unemployed people. So I would -- I know this is a difficult time, but I think maybe it's time to say we've got an emergency. Put it to the public if you want, but go for a tax increase for the core services like social

services, health care, WIC, etcetera. Thank you.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you. Kathy Malloy.

**MS. MALLOY:**

Thank you for again providing me this opportunity, this time to speak to the Health Committee. My name is Kathleen Malloy. I'm a 30-year Suffolk County retiree and a member of our own Suffolk County AME union.

From a union perspective, I attended the Long Island Workers Annual Memorial Service this past Saturday, April 28th, at the New York State Building. This memorial is always held on the 28th of April because that is the anniversary of the creation of OSHA which promotes, and is supposed to guarantee, health and safety at the workplace. No worker, public or private sector, should ever fear death or illness just by going to work, and yet each year I attend these worker memorial services and there's more and more names that have been added to the list.

Are we moving backward in providing safety at the workplace by laying off 315 County workers, many of whom not only provide important and vital public services, but whose County jobs actually protect their coworkers as well? I am afraid the answer is yes. Severely under staffing all of your County offices will most surely not only place the remaining County workers in jeopardy, but also every Suffolk County resident who seeks any type of the myriad of services provided by County workers. Let us remember the important words, and I will agree with Legislator Romaine, of our esteemed former Legislator who I admire deeply -- and by the way, I worked with him in this office in 1979 -- John J. Foley who said government's business is to provide public service, which costs money to do so. To quote Legislator Calarco, "It is what it is," and it has always been. And that is what every single person in this room does and wants to continue to do. We here today fully recognize the County's responsibility to its residents and its taxpayers and I ask you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to do the same.

Thank you.

*Applause*

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you. I have to just state this with regards to the speakers. We've come to the end of our speaker list and what is important for you to realize, and for me I take this personally, especially a lot of people hailed at having a physician in the Legislature on the Health Committee, that I would be someone that would advocate and champion these causes and this is what we intend to do. I have -- I share your concerns. I will take this up with legal and BRO with regards to if a position is 100% funded, whereas if you cut that position you lose the revenue, I don't think -- regardless of how, whether or not they accounted for the revenue or not, I would defer to legal, that we can amend that budget because -- and maybe I'm very simple, I don't understand it. But if you have something and if you lose that service, you don't get that revenue, then I would defer that we -- in terms of -- I understand BRO's point of view, but I would also ask for an opinion from legal, that if I have the offset with regards to that that is a 100%, outside aided position, then I would submit that I can introduce a budget amendment and I would challenge that, that position. I'm going to ask for -- if you could just give me a quick remark regarding my deep concern.

**MR. NOLAN:**

Well, I think -- I don't want to do something off the top. I would talk to Craig and the Budget Review Office because, frankly, I'm not sure I understood the argument he was making. So I think we could probably get together and talk about it and figure out, you know, do we need an offset or

don't need an offset under the law. We can't introduce a budget amendment till our June meeting, I believe, in any event, so we have time to work out that issue.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

But I do appreciate -- and again, BRO works with us, you keep us out of trouble and I do respect, again, your expertise and working with me. But just I'm a very simple man and regardless of, you know -- I mean, I understand there's accounting principles. I'm just a doctor, just a simple country doctor from West Virginia.

*(\*Laughter\*)*

To me, if it's paid for and you cut it out and it's not paid for, then I -- and we can talk about it. I guess I -- on the record, what I'm saying to the constituents that are out there, what I saw -- and I'm working with our County Executive. He has an undaunting job, I've said this before on the record, but when I see 460 positions, 98 scheduled to be from the Department of Health. I was told that there was a victory that we got that list down to 315. I don't know why I felt so sick; it was supposedly a victory. But I was concerned that I saw the Department of Health go from 98 to over 128, I think, there was an additional 30 positions. So the Department of Health went from 20% of the proposed layoffs to over 40%. And when you do those types of cuts, it has to have an impact on the services that we are obligated to provide to people. So you did make a difference.

The last meeting we had a number of speakers regarding the Tobacco Cessation Program, and because of what you did, you gave me, again, the voice because of your e-mails, that we were able to go to the Executive and, working with our leadership, we were able to get that taken out of the budget mitigation. So we are going to celebrate that victory, that Smoking Cessation has been preserved. But we have a long way to go, and there's a lot of instances where we see that there are partially-funded positions, fully-funded positions.

But outside the money, I am working with the Commissioner to say what is our mission? Help me understand it as a Legislator. We have to do our job as a Department of Health, we have to protect our most vulnerable, we have to protect those who can't speak for themselves, so I'm committed to doing that.

So with that being said, there is correspondence that was passed to all of the Legislators regarding the STD services and the positions that were abolished, and also the remaining positions, demonstrating that, again, there may be some aided positions, partially-aided positions that were cut. And we can see, as Legislator Romaine did demonstrate, the important impact of making sure that we -- not as a mandated mission, that we protect the public against communicable diseases. So we are going to do that, I would ask my colleagues to review that. We will be putting in more amendments. I will be working with all of the Legislators, Republicans, Democrats, and we will do the right thing.

I'm going to move on to the agenda, unless I -- my colleagues have a comment. Legislator Kennedy.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Doctor, just one thing that I'd like to add to that, and particularly as it goes to the STD's. We do have a couple of the nurses here in the audience. We've shared the information, you've seen it firsthand; of all of us, you know what the implications of this are. And the discussion, I think, is important, particularly as to the funding aspects of it. And to hear from the Commissioner very clearly that he's hearing that we're saying that we know it is an impossibility for the department to fulfill this most basic public health function with the layoffs.

And as we go through this process, I think you articulated exactly how things have unfolded to date with these remedies, but that speaks to the importance of what gets put on the record here. So I really would like to have that conversation with him and perhaps some of the nurses from the STD. This is not to single them out. Twenty-four nurses being laid off in the Health Department is unconscionable, and every one of them has spoken very passionately about the work that they do and their dedication. But you pointed out, we are faced with this chasm and this bottomless pit of budgetary loss. But quite frankly, if we can't deal with STD's, we can all fold up our tents and go home.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Absolutely. Very well spoken.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Yes.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

If we could, I'd like to make a resolution to take IR 1439 out of order regarding the establishment of a County Comprehensive Cancer Information Website. It's Legislator Muratore's legislation and he's been waiting all day for this one piece of legislation.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

I second that. All those in favor? Opposed? *Approved (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)*. We'll take that out of order.

So moving to the agenda, 14 -- what is it, 39?

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Yes. I'll make a motion to approve.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Second.

**LEG. ANKER:**

I'll make a motion to table.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

I have to read it into the record. *1439-12 - Directing the Department of Health Services to establish a County Comprehensive Cancer Information Website (Muratore)*. There's been a motion to approve and there's also a motion to table.

**LEG. ANKER:**

On the motion?

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

On the motion, Legislator Anker.

**LEG. ANKER:**

I think it's -- you know, it's a great idea to create websites on health issues, but we already have this website through the Cancer Awareness Task Force. So I think this may be redundant. I don't know if you want to explain how this is going to be different than the Cancer Awareness website that's already with the County.

**LEG. MURATORE:**

Did you read the resolution?

**LEG. ANKER:**

(Nodded head yes).

**LEG. MURATORE:**

You did, okay. So what I'm asking -- you know, just a little bit of dialogue first. Being a cancer survivor myself and seeing what's going on with our PO, Legislator Lindsay, I saw an importance to maybe mirror what the State is doing for the residents of our County and create a comprehensive website where people can go and get information about cancer. Because, you know, as, Doc, you know, early detection and education is the key to success in conquering cancer and other diseases. So with technology being the way it is and what's happening with, you know, our people in government and our workers, this will be something that we can move on right away. It's not a big job. I believe they're working on something already. We can mirror what the State does. So why table it? You know, and I would even ask, rather than -- as the sponsor, either pass it or fail it. You know, don't table it. You're just playing games with it, that's it, in my view. Okay?

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Legislator Anker.

**LEG. ANKER:**

This is something that no one should ever play games with, and I think that really was a misstatement. I was -- I've been on the Cancer Awareness Task Force for a number of years and we worked diligently to create this website. And I think it would be -- a better idea would be to add your information and attach it to what we already have in place. Again, I think this is just a -- I think there's a continued discussion to -- would you like to comment?

**LEG. MURATORE:**

It's not on -- is it on the Health Department website?

**LEG. ANKER:**

(Nodded head yes).

**LEG. MURATORE:**

We haven't seen it.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Dr. Tomarken, could you give some input?

**COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:**

Maybe I can clarify this. The Cancer Awareness Task -- sorry?

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Why don't you sit?

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Commissioner, please have a seat.

**COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:**

I've been sitting all day, I prefer to stand.

*(\*Laughter\*)*

But thank you. The Cancer Awareness Task Force is now in the Department of Health due to the budget of last year. And when we got the call from Legislator Muratore's Office, we started working on this website with Aimee Yuchatz, who is basically in charge of the Cancer Awareness Task Force. So it has been pretty much formatted, it's not up yet, but we're working to make it just as requested, similar to the State and links to the State, so we're almost there. So the Cancer Awareness Task Force is part of it.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Commissioner --

**COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:**

And their logo will be on it and their information, you know, some of their information will be on it as well.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Would this resolution conflict with any work that the task force is doing?

**COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:**

Not to my knowledge.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Okay.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

No, it's a belts and suspenders. It's like chicken soup, it can't hurt.

**LEG. MURATORE:**

It just codifies it, Doc. It just puts more on it, that's all, you know, make it more complete.

**COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:**

We thought it was a good idea with or without a resolution, so we went ahead and started it and it's moving along, so.

**LEG. ANKER:**

So it's up and going and everything is working out well with that? It's that what's happening right now?

**COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:**

I'm sorry. Say again?

**LEG. ANKER:**

It's ready to go up and go forward with?

**COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:**

The IT people are working on a layout. We got the gist of the information we want to put in, it's just a matter of them designing it and then reviewing it, making sure it works.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you. Legislator Browning.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

No, just real quick. Because I lost a good friend in January to cancer, January 3rd, our first Organizational Day, and his wife has cancer, and the neighbor across the street has cancer -- had cancer, passed away. So I'm just -- and I actually had been in touch with the State about trying to

get information on cancer clusters. Is that what this is going to do, is to create, you know --

**LEG. MURATORE:**

Hopefully, hopefully it will do that, yeah. I mean, if we look at the State site you see there and then coupled with ours, I mean, I think we'll have a great place to go and learn about cancer and early detection and early treatment.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

And it will identify the types of cancers, yeah?

**COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:**

No, no. Well, this is more for patients.

**LEG. MURATORE:**

Sure, it's within the resolution.

**COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:**

Well, I mean, in the resolution it may be a little different, but initially it was for patients to access resources for cancer treatment.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Okay.

**COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:**

But there'll be more to it than that.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

We have a motion to table and a motion to approve. Is there a second on the motion to table? The motion to table dies without a second.

Motion to approve. It has a second with Legislator Kennedy. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries, congratulations. Thank you, Legislator Muratore. ***Approved (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)***.

**LEG. MURATORE:**

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you to the committee for your help. And thanks, Dr. Tomarken.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Thank you, Legislator Muratore. And would the Clerk please list me as a cosponsor?

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Renee, me too.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

All right. Moving on to the agenda, back to the beginning, the **Tabled Resolutions:**

***IR 1021-12 - Adopting Local Law No. -2012, A Charter Law to require legislative approval of changes to the fee structure for review of septic, sewer and water systems (Cilmi).***

Motion to table.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

I'll second.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Opposed.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Opposed, Legislator Romaine and Kennedy. *Tabled (VOTE: 3-2-0-0).*

*1200-12 - To accelerate the evaluation and remediation of Brownfields in Suffolk County (Cilmi).* Motion to table.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Second.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Seconded. All those in favor? Opposed?

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Opposed.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Opposed, Legislator Romaine. Otherwise, it carries.

*Tabled (VOTE: 4-1-0-0 - Opposed: Legislator Romaine).*

*IR 1232-12 - Amending the 2012 Capital Budget and appropriating funds in connection with Brownfields Site Rehabilitation (CP 8219)(Cilmi).*

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Same motion.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Same motion, same second. All those in favor? Opposed?

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Opposed.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Opposed.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Opposed, Legislator Kennedy and Romaine. *The tabling motion carries (VOTE: 3-2-0-0).*

*IR 1288-12 - Adopting Local Law No. -2012, A Local Law to ensure secure storage of controlled medications at pharmacies located in Suffolk County (Spencer).* I'll make a motion to table, it's my resolution. I've been working with the pharmacies to come up with a better piece of legislation.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Second.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Second the motion to table. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? *Motion is tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).*

**Introductory Resolutions:**

***IR 1363-12 - Approving the appointment of Albert J. Rizzi to the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board – Group D. (Schneiderman).*** Is Mr. Rizzi present today? He does not have to be. He's not present. I'll make a motion to approve.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Second.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Seconded by Legislator Romaine. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

***Approved (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

***IR 1387-12 - Adopting Local Law No. -2012, A Local Law to protect public health at hookah bars (Spencer).*** Hookah, H-O-O-K-A-H, and that's regarding the bars where people are smoking.

***(\*Laughter\*)***

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

I hear the Secret Service visits these bars.

***(\*Laughter\*)***

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

I need to -- motion to table for a public hearing.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Second.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion is ***tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

***IR 1395-12 - Adopting Local Law No. -2012, A Local Law to clarify coal tar sealer prohibition (Presiding Officer Lindsay).*** We need to table for public hearing. Motion to table.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Second.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Second by Legislator Anker. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Motion is tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

***IR 1428-12 - Amending the 2012 Adopted Operating Budget to accept and appropriate 100% State Aid from the New York State Office of Mental Health for Pederson Krag Center, Inc. And additional 100% State Aid for Federation of Organizations, Inc. (County Executive).*** Motion to approve.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

And place on the Consent Calendar.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

And be placed on the Consent Calendar.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Second.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

And seconded. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? *Approved and it's to be placed on the Consent Calendar (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).*

IR 1439, directing the department of Health Services --

**MR. NOLAN:**

We did that.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

*IR 1448-12 - Authorizing the drilling of wells on County parkland for firefighting purposes (Romaine).*

**LEG. ANKER:**

Motion to table.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Motion to table.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Can I ask a question?

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

A question on the motion.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Motion to approve.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

I'll second.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Okay. Motion to -- there's a motion to table and a motion to approve. On the motion, we have Sarah Lansdale, our Planning Director. Sarah?

**MS. LANSDALE:**

Good evening, everyone. It's great to be here at the Health Committee, I'm not normally here. I just wanted to, on this resolution, IR 1448, indicate that according to the rules and regulations of SEQRA, this project is an Unlisted Action because it's occurring on parkland which requires the completion of an EAF, which we have not received yet, and then it needs to be referred to CEQ. So the upcoming CEQ meeting, Council on Environmental Quality, is on May 16th and we're still accepting the EAF in time for that meeting.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Motion to table pending the required paperwork, then, second the motion. Legislator Romaine.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

First of all, this was laid on the table a week ago this past Tuesday, that's nine days ago. At no time did this Planning Director pick up a phone and say, "By the way, your resolution to drill wells by our well drillers on County parkland may require an EAF and should have some form of SEQRA attached to it." At no time did Counsel, who drafted this, inform me of that; and it's not a criticism of Counsel

because I know he works on tons of resolutions. It's a criticism, unrestricted criticism of our Planning Department and their failure to notify me and then showing up here at the last minute to make me aware of this. This type of lack of coordination is the type of thing that breaks down government.

I hope in the interim we don't have another forest fire in the Pine Barrens that could have been prevented or could have been contained better. Because right now there are no hydrants in the Pine Barrens, and when they fight fires they have to actually wait till the fire burns to the road so they can drive their pumper trucks up and extend their hoses from the bumper trucks. Because they can't go into the interior unless there's a pond or a river or creek or whatever that they can draft water from.

So I have no objection to tabling this, but for me to leave this unsaid and not to chastise Planning for their lack of coordination in this manner, I would have missed an opportunity. So this will not happen again. And I trust, Ms. Lansdale, when there is an EAF about a resolution that has not been incorporated into that resolution, yourself or a member of your staff will call prior to this committee so that we could start work on that.

Now, will this EAF go forward at this point?

**MS. LANSDALE.**

Yes. If it's received in the next couple of days, yes, it will be on the next --

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Received?

**MR. NOLAN:**

Legislator Romaine?

**MS. LANSDALE:**

Received from your office.

**MR. NOLAN:**

I think in this particular -- if I may ask the Director. Would it be a short form EAF that would be required for this?

**MS. LANSDALE:**

Yes.

**MR. NOLAN:**

Okay. Typically it's done by the originating unit. I've started doing these type of short-form EAF's, so our office would have to prepare it and submit it to them and hopefully in time for CEQ to review it, that would be the goal.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

I have no problem with this being tabled considering the issue. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Thank you. Motion to approve is withdrawn. There's now a motion to table by Legislator Anker and seconded by Legislator Spencer. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled***  
***(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)***.

So again, to everyone who stayed till 6:15, we had a relatively short Health Committee. You know, I -- during these difficult times, we will continue to work together to do the right thing. I appreciate

your communication, it helps make us better Legislators. So again, thank you. And thank you for staying so late, I really appreciate that.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Doctor, in deference to the late hour, I don't want to hold the committee up, but I am going to ask through the Chair if Dr. Tomarken can hang out for a couple of minutes to have a conversation with me along with the STD nurses, and see if we can kind of come to a meeting of the minds there, all right? Without holding up the committee.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Absolutely. Motion to adjourn.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Motion.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Second.

**CHAIRMAN SPENCER:**

Motion by Legislator Anker, seconded by Legislator Browning.  
We're adjourned. Thank you.

*(\*The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 PM\*)*

*{ } - Denotes Spelled Phonetically*