



## **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **OISHEI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL STATEMENT ON STATEWIDE HEALTH CARE FUNDING**

**BUFFALO, N.Y (April 5, 2023)** – Oishei Children's Hospital today released the following statement on the importance of increased statewide health care funding:

"As the only children's safety net hospital in Western New York, our team of healthcare workers are dedicated to caring for the mental, physical and emotional well-being of our community's children and families – nearly 70% of whom rely on support and services funded by Medicaid. In our primary care clinics, that number increases to over 90%.

Throughout our region, 1 in 5 children live in poverty, which represents over 61,000 of our families, friends and neighbors whose healthcare outcomes are significantly impacted by widening socioeconomic disparities. Unfortunately, the healthcare industry continues to face financial headwinds as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the complex needs of our patient population continues to increase.

While Governor Hochul and the Western New York legislative delegation recognize the hardships facing the healthcare sector and have made great strides to address them including focusing on mental health resources, dedicated funding in the FY 2024 state budget and a \$25 million grant for Oishei Children's Hospital last fall, more needs to be done to protect our kids.

At Oishei Children's Hospital and our outpatient and specialty care clinics, we care for over 170,000 of our community's most vulnerable kids and families every year. That being said, we support a robust and sustained funding plan that addresses the ever-changing healthcare needs of those in our care and call on the State to support the following:

- Although New York State has one of the lowest rates of uninsured children, it is unsustainable that Medicaid reimburses only \$0.61 for every dollar spent. We need higher reimbursement rates to invest in the resources needed to support our children and help them grow, thrive and reach their full potential.
- We need support to hire more social workers, therapists, mental health specialists, community health workers and care coordinators to address and eliminate the socioeconomic disparities that were amplified during the pandemic.
- We need support to ensure we have enough nurses and medical assistants to care for the sickest and most vulnerable children who are admitted to the hospital and seek care in our ambulatory centers.

We know that investing in children's health and well-being builds a stronger community for all. These investments keep kids on track in school, strengthens our workforce and leads to economic growth, creates healthier adults, provides a path out of poverty and is simply the right thing to do. We're grateful for the work that's been done and stand ready to protect investments that allow us to collectively and effectively care for our community's kids and families."

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