

The Brooklyn Hospital Center Goes to Albany

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L to R: **Richard B. Becker, M.D.**, President and CEO of the Brooklyn Hospital Center, NYS Assemblymember **Hakeem Jeffries** (Assembly District 57), and **Jonathan M. Weld**, Chairman of TBHC's Board of Trustees after meetings in Albany, NY. Dr. Becker and Mr. Weld joined over 350 health care executives for The Health Care Association of New York's (HANY'S) Lobbying Day against **Gov. David Paterson's** proposed \$1 billion in health care provider cuts and taxes.. "We came to tell our representatives that these proposed cuts will be devastating for the people of Brooklyn," says Dr. Becker, adding that urban hospitals like TBHC provide significant care to a low-income population, which entails extensive financial challenges in terms of Medicaid reimbursement and the cost to deliver care. "We're caring for patients at the lower end of the economic spectrum with higher incidences of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and stroke with poorer outcomes," he says. "Screening and preventive care is far more cost-effective than treating existing conditions, but many patients first see physicians when their illnesses are already advanced due to lack of education and access. In Brooklyn, we're trying to address the challenges of decreasing dollars for Medicaid, increasing numbers of undocumented patients, and how to provide the best possible care with limited resources. Why should hospital margins be one percent when insurance companies have double-digit margins? Why should physicians order fewer tests when lawyers are driving up malpractice costs, forcing them to practice more defensive, but not necessarily better, medicine?"

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