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Raising Women's Voices-New York ☞ Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy ☞ Young Invincibles

Memorandum in Support of A.2986/S.5144 May 2019

An Act to amend the Public Health Law, in relation to the closure of hospitals

Health Care for All New York (HCFANY) is a statewide coalition of consumer-focused organizations dedicated to achieving quality, affordable health coverage for all New Yorkers, and ensuring that the concerns of real New Yorkers are heard and reflected in policy conversations. **We support A.2986/S.5144, which would require public notice and a public hearing in advance of a planned hospital closure, in order to gather consumer comments that can inform a final closure plan.**

Over the last 20 years, 41 hospitals have closed across New York State, leaving consumers with diminished options for timely, affordable health care. Unfortunately, the Public Health Law currently requires a public hearing *30 days after the closure*, which is too late to identify likely service gaps that would be created by the closure and develop means of addressing those gaps. It is critical that affected consumers have a say about such momentous changes to their local health delivery systems. Under this bill, public officials in the affected area would receive advance notice about a proposed hospital closure and there would be a public hearing to gather consumer comments *before the closing*. We support this bill and suggest amendments to strengthen it, including:

- Making the provisions of this bill apply statewide, instead of just in New York City, and apply to the closures of time-sensitive hospital services, such as emergency departments and maternity care. Closures of hospitals, EDs and maternity units in have negatively affected local consumers across the state.
- Ensuring that the general public is notified, in addition to notification of local elected officials, 90 days in advance of a planned closure.
- Requiring a public hearing in the affected community, at night or on a weekend, at least 60 days in advance of a planned closure.
- Requiring that a final closure plan address concerns raised by consumers.

HCFANY strongly urges the enactment of this bill and supports the proposed amendments described above.