



May 10, 2023

Dear Senators and Assembly Members:

As clergy and faith leaders from across New York State, we know intimately the toll that the high cost of medical care takes on our communities. Too many of our community members avoid or delay necessary medical treatment because of the cost, and too many who do receive care are then faced with overwhelming bills and debt. We are writing to urge you to take action to alleviate this unjust burden this session by preventing medical debt from impacting New Yorkers' credit scores and reforming New York's Hospital Financial Assistance law to ensure that hospital financial aid money gets to the patients who need it.

New York's hospital prices are some of the highest in the nation and patients routinely struggle to pay their hospital bills. To help New York hospitals - all of which are non-profit charities - provide free or low-cost care, the state contributes 1.13 billion dollars to an Indigent Care Pool. However in the last five years, hospitals sued more than 52,000 patients, including at least 4,000 during the height of the pandemic. A random sample of thousands of these court files indicates that few patients were informed of or offered financial assistance. Many who were sued, including the 4,880 patients who had liens placed on their homes as a result of these lawsuits and thousands more whose wages have been garnished, likely qualified for hospital financial assistance but were not offered this help.

Enough is enough. Medical care is not a luxury, and it should never result in the financial devastation these patients experience.

We strongly urge you to sponsor and help pass the Ounce of Prevention Act (S1366/A6027) and the Fair Medical Debt Reporting Act (S.4907/A6275) this session. The Ounce of Prevention Act will help to prevent medical debt by making hospital financial assistance more accessible and ensuring that money allocated to hospitals for charity care is used for that purpose. The Fair Medical Debt Reporting Act will

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protect New Yorkers from medical debt by prohibiting the reporting of medical bills to credit reporting agencies.

Each of our faiths holds in common a belief in the dignity of every human being. We also share the conviction that our society has a moral obligation to care for the most vulnerable among us and to ensure fairness in our economic and political institutions. Our current healthcare system is an affront to these shared values in the way that it pursues profit over the well-being of patients and our communities. The Ounce of Prevention Act and Fair Medical Debt Reporting Act will be important steps toward making sure medical care is accessible to patients, without sending them into debt. We ask that you prioritize passing this critical legislation this session.

Signed,

1. Reverend Andrea Abbott, Baldwinsville
2. Rev. Carl Adair, Zion Episcopal Church, Sunnyside
3. Reverend Frank Alagna, Holy Cross Episcopal Church, Kingston
4. Reverend Garrett Anderson, Liverpool First Presbyterian Church, Liverpool
5. Ms. Una Andrews, Holy Name of Mary Parish, Croton-on-Hudson
6. Rev. Earl Arnold, Presbyterian Church U.S.A, Owego
7. Ms. Lenore Atkins, St. Agnes, East Marion
8. Reverend Sara Baron, First UMC Schenectady, Schenectady
9. Priest Yamily Bass-Choate, Episcopal Church, New York
10. Bishop Donna Bernardini-Carr, St Lucy's, Baldwinsville
11. Priest Charles Blauvelt, Trinity Episcopal Church, Saugerties
12. Reverend Lynn C Bodden, First Reformed Church of Schenectady, Schenectady
13. Reverend Chris Boyd, First Congregational UCC, Salt Point
14. Reverend Melissa Boyer, Katonah United Methodist Church, Katonah
15. Reverend Francis J Breen, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Ossining
16. Reverend Emily Brewer, First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York,



## New York

17. Reverend Chloe Breyer, The Interfaith Center of New York, New York
18. Priest William Brisotti, Rockville Centre Diocese, Ridge
19. Sister Elizabeth Broyles, Companions of Mary the Apostle, West Park
20. Rev. Micah Bucey, Judson Memorial Church, New York
21. Pastor Edith Buckley, Bread Of Life Pantry, New York
22. Sister Kathy Byrnes, Sisters of Charity, New York
23. Dr. Karyn Carlo, Safe Haven UCC, Bellerose
24. Ms. Susan Castelli-Hill, Roman Catholic Church, Melville
25. Rev. D. Lowell Chilton, First Lutheran Church, Albany
26. Reverend Joe Cleveland, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs, Saratoga Springs
27. Reverend Joya Colon-Berezin, Scarsdale Congregational Church, Scarsdale
28. The Rev. Cn. Victor Conrado, Episcopal Diocese of New York, New York
29. Rev. Peter Cook, New York State Council of Churches, Albany
30. Sister Lorraine Cooper, Sisters of Charity, New York
31. Rev. Jeffrey Courter, First Presbyterian Church, Forest Hills
32. Dr. William Cross, Zen Center of Syracuse, Manlius
33. Reverend Terry Culbertson, Church of God, Syracuse
34. Rev. Marilyn Cunningham, Graves Memorial CME Church, Rochester
35. Rabbi Matt Cutler, Congregation Gates of Heaven, Schenectady
36. Cantor Shayna De Lowe, Rodeph Sholom, New York
37. Sister Carol DeAngelo, Sisters of Charity of New York, Bronx
38. Sister Sheleeza, Deen, Safe Zone Cross Culture Youth Inc, Jamaica
39. Ms. Luanne DeFelice, St Augustine's Church, Baldwinsville
40. Rev. Kyle Delhagen, Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church, Guilderland
41. Rev. Emily DeTar Birt, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northern Westchester, New York
42. Frank Devaney, Associates, Sisters of Charity New York, Rockville Centre
43. Patricia Devaney, Associates, Sisters of Charity New York, Rockville Centre
44. Reverend Jennifer DeWeerth, United Church of Christ, Clinton



45. Elder Terence Diggory, Presbyterian New England Congregational Church, Saratoga Springs
46. Reverend Kathy Donley, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Albany
47. Deacon Jean Dougherty, St Andrew's Lutheran Church, Smithtown
48. Rabbi William Dreskin, Woodlands Community Temple, Ardsley
49. Reverend Beth DuBois, University United Methodist Church, Syracuse
50. Reverend Rick Edwards, New York Annual Conference, United Methodist Church, Catskill
51. Pastor Valerie Faust, Living Word Tabernacle, Inc., Albany
52. Pastor Arelis Figueroa, Kairos Center/PPC, New York
53. Rabbi Brian Fink, JCC Manhattan, Brooklyn
54. Priest David Fleenor, Episcopal Church of the Ascension, New York
55. Reverend Mary Foulke, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Harlem
56. Rev. Frank, Greece Baptist Church, Rochester
57. Rabbi Jonathan Freirich, VOICE Buffalo, Buffalo
58. Elder Kevin Fuscus, First Presbyterian Church of Albany, Delmar
59. Reverend Anahi Galante, Holyrood / Santa Cruz, New York
60. Reverend James Galasinski, Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton, Canton
61. Sister Eileen Gannon, Dominican Sisters, Sparkill
62. Rabbi Thomas Gardner, Riverdale Temple, New York
63. Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert, Unitarian Universalist, Rochester
64. Pastor Bruce Gillette, First Presbyterian Union Church, Owego
65. Bishop Mary Glasspool, Episcopal Diocese of New York, New York
66. Sister Doreen Glynn, Sisters of Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany Province, Latham
67. Priest Luis Gomez, Church of the Mediator, New York
68. Reverend Tom Goodhue, United Methodist Church, New York
69. Reverend Gina Gore, Cath. School, New York
70. Rabbi Miriam Grossman, Kolot, New York
71. Reverend Gwendolyn Hadley-Hall, Christ Temple United Baptist Church/AACEO, Corona



72. Greg Halzen, New Day, Brooklyn
73. Reverend Molly Hammerhand, First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse, Syracuse
74. Elder Susan Haney, First Presbyterian Church, Albany
75. Reverend Elise Hanley, St. Ann & the Holy Trinity, New York
76. Ms. Theresa Harper, Hopps Memorial Church, Syracuse
77. Reverend Sarah Henkel, United Presbyterian Church of Middletown, Middletown
78. Elder Howard Henry, University Presbyterian Church, Buffalo
79. Reverend Susan Hill, Church of the Holy Apostles, New York
80. Reverend Andrea Holroyd, Schoharie United Presbyterian Church, PCUSA, Schoharie
81. Pastor Wendy Hu-Au, Metro Hope Church, New York
82. Reverend José Humphreys III, Metro Hope Covenant Church, New York
83. Mr. Bill Hurley, Associate, Sisters of Charity of NY, Washingtonville
84. Ms. Josephine Incorvaia, Caritas, Middle Island
85. Reverend Markeisha M Jackson, Imperishable Ministries of Western New York, Buffalo
86. Rev. Dr. Eric Jackson, Plymouth Congregational Church, UCC, Liverpool
87. Ms. Suzanne James, Church of the Good Shepherd, New York
88. Reverend Kimberly Johnson, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork, Bridgehampton
89. Reverend Kathi Jones, First Presbyterian Church, Valatie
90. Bishop Alonzo Jordan, Dew Drop Ministries, Greenlawn
91. Bishop Eileen Judge, Sisters of Charity of NY, New York
92. Reverend Jarrett Kerbel, All Angels Church, New York
93. Rev. Dr. Carol Kessler, ELCA, Ossining
94. Sister Honora Kinney, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany
95. Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Albany
96. Reverend Mark Koenig, Presbytery of New York City, New York
97. Reverend Wiliam Koenig, Presbytery of New York City, New York



98. Priest James Konicki, Holy Name of Jesus PNCC, Schenectady
99. Reverend Posey Krakowsky, Church of the Ascension NYC, New York
100. Reverend Charles Kramer, Poughkeepsie
101. Reverend Cheri Kroon, Old First Reformed Church, New York
102. Reverend Diane Lacey, Church of Gethsemane, New York
103. Ms. Lily Laiman, Zion Episcopal Church, New York
104. Reverend Miriam Lawrence Leupold, Presbyterian Church, Albany
105. Rev. Dr. Virginia Lawson, Zen Center of Syracuse, Syracuse
106. Reverend Molly Jane Layton, The Episcopal Church, New York
107. Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein, Congregation Shir Shalom, Buffalo
108. Rev. Dr. William Levering, First Presbyterian Church of Valatie, Niskayuna
109. Ms. Peggy Linehan, CTE Sisters of Charity NY, Yonkers
110. Rev. Robin Lostetter, Geneva Presbytery, PCUSA, Owego
111. Rev. Brian Lothridge, United Methodist Church, Olean
112. Reverend DeeAnne Lowman, UMC, Schenectady
113. Reverend Emily Lukanich, Christ Church Riverdale, New York
114. Reverend Mark Lukens, Bethany Congregational UCC, East Rockaway
115. Cantor Abbe Lyons, Gilat Rina, Ithaca
116. Deni, Mack, RocACTS, a federation of Faith in Action, Rochester
117. Rev. Marranda Major, First United Presbyterian Church, Troy
118. Rabbi Marc Margolius, Institute for Jewish Spirituality, New York
119. Imam M Zaman Marwat, IAFL Islamic Center, Horseheads
120. Rev. Elizabeth Maxwell, Church of the Ascension, New York
121. Elder Janet Mazzaroppi, University Presbyterian Church, Getzville
122. Reverend Dennis McDonald, Upper Room Inclusive Catholic Community,  
Clifton Park
123. Reverend Bruce McKay, Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC, Buffalo
124. Carol McLoughlin, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Queens,  
Whitestone
125. Reverend Kymberly McNair, Bedford Hills
126. Mr. John McNamara, Caritas, Rocky Point



127. Rev. West McNeill, Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS, Schenectady
128. Rabbi Lev Meirowitz Nelson, Flatbush Jewish Center, Brooklyn
129. Reverend Garrett Mettler, St. Stephen's Episcopal, Armonk
130. Sister Rosemarie Milazzo, Maryknoll Sisters, Ossining
131. Dr. Marcos Miranda, New York State Chaplain Task Force, Inc., Westbury
132. Jenny Monroe, The Park Church, Elmira
133. Sister Mary Beth Moore, Sisters of Charity, Hampton Bays
134. Reverend Allison Moore, St. Andrew's, New Paltz
135. Ms. Silvia Morales, Catholic church, Bronx
136. Reverend Frank Morales, Episcopal Church, New York
137. Mr. Brian Morris, St Anthony RC Church, Rocky Point
138. Reverend Gwyneth Murphy, Messiah Episcopal Church, Rhinebeck
139. Rabbi Ariel Naveh, Bend the Arc, Wantagh
140. Mr. Kevin Nelson, First United Methodist Church, Schenectady
141. Rabbi Dan Ornstein, Congregation Ohav Shalom, Albany
142. Rev. Emily Otto, United Church of Christ, Schenectady
143. Reverend Jeffrey Palmer, The Community Hospice/ ST. Peter's Healthcare Network, Troy
144. Priest Edward Palumbos, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Fairport
145. Rev. Joe Papparone, Mennonite Church USA, Latham
146. Reverend Gloria Payne-Carter, Episcopal Church, Poughkeepsie
147. Rev. Dr. Peter W Peters, St. Luke & St. Simon Cyrene Episcopal Church, Rochester
148. Ms. Greta Petry, United Methodist, Castleton
149. Reverend Robert Pierce, Sayville United Church of Christ, Islip
150. Reverend Alison Quin, Grace Episcopal Church, Red Hook
151. Priest Gerardo Carlos Ramirez, Good Shepherd Church, Roosevelt Island
152. Chairperson Erik Rasmussen, Long Island Council of Churches, Wading River
153. Pastor Paul Rees-Rohrbacher, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Albany
154. Sister Claire Regan, Sisters of Charity NY, New York



155. Rabbi Mackenzie Reynolds, New York
156. Reverend Rosalie Richards, Diocese of New York, New York
157. Rev. Dr. Bruce Rivera, CHRIST CHURCH UCC, Bronx
158. Mr Jerry Rivers, Roosevelt-Freeport Church of Christ, Roosevelt
159. Colleen Roberts, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, New York
160. Sister Marlene Ann Roeger, Sisters of St. Joseph
161. Reverend Kelly Rogers Scarsdale Congregational Church, Scarsdale
162. Reverend Caiphia Rolle, Abyssinian, New York
163. Pastor Richard Rose, First Baptist Church Painted Post, Ithaca
164. Deacon Thomas Ruda, Catholic, Watkins Glen
165. Rev. Charles Ryu, Morningside United Methodist Church, New York
166. Priest María Isabel Santiviago, Episcopalian (Retired), New York
167. Elder Baba Schmm, East Elmhurst
168. Priest Steve Schunk, St. Mary's, Cold Spring
169. Priest James Sheehan, Roman Catholic
170. Bishop Allen Shin, Episcopal Diocese of New York, New York
171. Reverend Bonnie Shoultz, Zen Center of Syracuse, Syracuse
172. Reverend Merle Showers, University UMC Buffalo, Buffalo
173. Tom Sigrist, Unity Church, Albany
174. Reverend Erik Simon, First Presbyterian Church of Ballston Spa, Nyack
175. Reverend Heather Sisk, St. Paul's, Pleasant Valley
176. Elder Virginia Slater, Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Church, Saranac Lake
177. Rev. William Spilly, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Hamlin
178. Reverend Caroline Stacey, St. Luke in the Fields, New York
179. Rabbi Oren Steinitz, Congregation Kol Ami, Elmira
180. Reverend Katy Stenta, New Covenant Presbyterian Church, Colonie
181. Reverend Susan Strang, Schenectady
182. Rabbi Joshua Strom, Congregation B'nai Yisrael, Armonk
183. Elder Maria Studer, United Presbyterian Church, Levittown
184. Sister Noreen Sugrue, Sisters of Charity, North Salem
185. The Rev. Canon Marie A. Tatro, Episcopal Diocese of L.I./St. Ann & the Holy





Trinity Church, New York

186. Priest Tim Taugher, St. Francis of Assisi, Binghamton
187. Reverend Althea Taylor, Bronx Bethany Church of the Nazarene
188. Reverend Liz Theoharis, Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice, New York
189. Reverend Adriene Thorne, Riverside Church, Brooklyn
190. Rabbi Rachel Timoner, Congregation Beth Elohim, Brooklyn
191. Reverend Jo-Ann Tipple, Reformed Church in America, Ghent
192. Dr. Robert Trawick, Albany Presbytery, Albany
193. Ms. Elaine Troy, United Methodist, Rotterdam
194. Reverend Luis Vera, St. Nicholas of Tolentine, New York
195. Dr. James Watts, Plymouth Congregational, DeWitt
196. Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot, B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation, Albany
197. Rev. Dave Weissbard, Unitarian Universalist Church Canton, Canton
198. Reverend Andrew Wilkes, Double Love Experience Church, Brooklyn
199. Dr. William Wilkinson, Rochester ACTS, Webster
200. Reverend LaKisha Williams, Antioch Baptist Church, New York
201. Mr. Samuel Wilson, Jr., Community Protestant Church, Bronx
202. Rev. Dustin Wright, Messiah Lutheran Church, Schenectady
203. Reverend Chris Wylie, Upper NY United Methodist Church, Lewiston