

The Merge State Entities Article VII Budget bill (S6260/A9060) when first proposed by Governor Cuomo included sweeping changes to Public Health Law Article 30, the law that governs much of the EMS industry. The NYS EMS Coalition worked tirelessly for many weeks with the Governor's office and state legislators to try and amend this legislation into something we could all work with.

After much discussion and negotiation, the legislators decided that this particular major policy change would be best handled "off-budget" and, as you are aware, was not included as part of the final budget package.

Though this is good news for now, the concern continues that a major overhaul to Article 30 will continue to be perused by our elected representatives. With the looming possibility of reforms, NYSVARA has taken position to proactively work with key legislators now in order to ensure we are seated at the table throughout any revision process. Though we may have achieved some breathing room, it is imperative that we continue to prepare for change.

As we move into a planning and negotiation mindset, I am asking for your input on issues that are important to you. Please contact your District Director with your thoughts. I have asked them to solicit your comments and suggestions so that we may begin to compile a list of negotiation points that we can further discuss at our next Board Meeting. It is important, however, that I know where our districts stand on important issues as we move forward.

Simultaneously, NYSVARA & UNYAN (United New York Ambulance Network) were invited to the table with The NY Conference of Mayors, The Association of Towns and Villages and other volunteer fire organizations to discuss changes to Section 209B of General Municipal Law. This is the legislation that prohibits fire districts from billing for ambulance service. Though we do not disagree with their need to bill for service, we must be protective of the federal exemption for rural paramedic intercept that is attached to the prohibition. We will continue to work with these groups in an attempt to develop a solution agreeable to all parties.

On Thursday, April 19, 2012, the Coalition has been invited to meet with the New York State Commissioner of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, Jerome M. Hauer. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss with him deployment of EMS resources in the event of a catastrophic event. He has been tasked by the Governor to develop a deployment plan and we will be providing input.

On April 30, 2012 we will be holding our annual Legislative Day in Albany. It is an opportunity to meet with our elected officials and discuss with them issues concerning EMS in New York State. If you would like more information please contact our Legislative Committee at [legislative@nysvara.org](mailto:legislative@nysvara.org). I hope you will be able to join us.

NYSVARA continues to be the voice of volunteer, not-for profit EMS in New York State. As always, I thank you for your support and ask you that if you have any questions, comments or concerns please feel free to contact me. I hope to see everyone on Monday April 30 in Albany.

Be safe!

Michael J. Mastrianni, Jr. President