



OTSEGO COUNTY BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES
COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
197 MAIN STREET
COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK 13326-1129
PHONE: (607) 547-4202 FAX: (607) 547-4260

April 5, 2020

This is a critical time for our state and we must work together to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all New Yorkers. However, the suggestion by Governor Cuomo to redistribute ventilators, PPE and other medical supplies by force is deeply troubling. As we approach the apex of this crisis we cannot create greater risk and uncertainty for our residents.

For several weeks, our healthcare institutions and local governments have engaged in monumental efforts to address and prepare for the current crisis and strengthen our medical infrastructure as well as delivery of care. Upstate medical supplies should not be unilaterally redistributed as we face the COVID-19 peak that the governor himself says is at our doorstep. Our hospitals and our health care providers must be allowed to help make decisions on how best to care for the people they serve and not be burdened with additional stress from such rhetoric. We strongly encourage the governor to reconsider his decision and to work with all hospitals allocating resources to the proper locations, while ensuring each hospital still has the supplies needed to care for a growing patient load. In a time of crisis, taking ventilators and other supplies by force leaves people without protection and hospitals unable to respond to the predicted surge.

In view of Governor Cuomo's comments about resource allocations within the state for COVID-19 management, the County Board Chair has been in touch with our regional health care leaders and continues to monitor the situation with them. At this point, their view is that it is possible to offer selective assistance to NYC and the downstate region without jeopardizing the ability to meet the care requirements for our local region. We have been assured that if those circumstances begin to change, health care leaders will inform the board and we will collectively take the necessary actions to insure the levels of service required for the residents of our region.

We will continue to work with the Department of Health, medical providers and community leaders, as well as state government, to find innovative solutions to meet these challenges while caring for our current and future patients. Our supplies are not large, but we will do what we can. Our doctors, nurses, first responders, and others on the front lines continue to risk their health and safety to protect the lives of everyone. We must ensure these professionals have the resources to face that task. We welcome the opportunity to engage with our partners in the development of a collaborative plan that doesn't jeopardize local resources.