



**WOMEN & CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL OF BUFFALO**

A Kaleida Health Facility

TESTIMONY

NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF BUDGET & CAPITAL HEARING

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President

**Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo
(A Kaleida Health facility)**

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Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today.

My name is Cheryl Klass and I am the president of Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo. Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo, a Kaleida Health facility, is the regional center for comprehensive and state-of-the-art pediatric, neonatal, perinatal and obstetrical services in Western New York and beyond.

As we have learned with all of the testimony today, the State of New York has a very complicated process ahead as it begins to outline its next fiscal year budget. There are many needs, yet precious dollars available.

Here in Western New York, there has been tremendous discussion since last November about the Berger Commission and the hundreds of millions of dollars that are necessary to implement that reform plan. The Department of Budget will no doubt play a role in this process as the allocation of funding occurs.

During that same time, there has been a greater appreciation for the importance of the health care delivery system, in particular, its economic impact on Western New York. Health care is the fastest growing segment of our economy.

With that premise in mind, my appeal to the State Department of Budget today is to invest in the areas of growth for our community. Simply put, by investing in health care you will have an immediate and positive economic impact on Western New York. More importantly, you will help improve the quality of health care for our children.

One project in the development phase currently searching for funding is Women & Children's plan to build a new, state-of-the-art outpatient diagnostic and treatment center. This project is part of an \$85 million capital upgrade for our campus.

The Women & Children's Hospital team is developing physician-led plans for construction of this 190,000 sq. ft., five-story outpatient center on Hodge Ave. in the City of Buffalo. This center is *vital* to the long-term stability of the hospital. As we all know, the community rallied a few years back to keep the hospital where it is. Now that there is stability at the hospital, we need to do more to strengthen and grow it.

The outpatient diagnostic and treatment center will create several benefits for our entire community, including for our patients, families and the specialized physician, nursing and other clinical and support staffs. For example, recruitment and retention of specialized staff members will be enhanced by the new state-of-the-art facilities and technology for Women & Children's Hospital, which competes with regional pediatric medical centers throughout the country to recruit and retain the very best specialists.

The development plans are supported by a \$51 million investment from Frauenshuh HealthCare Real Estate Solutions, a Minneapolis, MN developer that will own the new building and will thereby return the land to a taxable property for the City of Buffalo, County of Erie and State of New York. That is good news for taxpayers.

And most importantly for our patients, who often have multiple special and developmental needs, there will be improved access and parking. Families and patients requiring specialized care within this center can and will be more effectively and efficiently cared for in a comfortable and family-friendly environment.

I know I speak on behalf of our patients and their families - as well as our physician, nursing and other clinical and support staffs at Women & Children's Hospital - when saying we feel this development project will have significant long-term benefits for generations of families throughout Western New York and beyond.

We are currently in the process of seeking government funding (\$10 million) to close the financial gap that currently exists. The State Assembly, State Senate, Governor's Office and Department of Health have all been briefed of our plans. Any efforts that the Department of Budget can lend to the fruition of this project are greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I, or my team, are available to discuss this most exciting initiative.