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## **HUDSON HEADWATERS CHIEF SEES BIG BENEFITS IN SPITZER PLANS**

GLENS FALLS, NY – John Rugge, M.D. and CEO of Hudson Headwaters Health Network, says that the health care plans outlined by Governor Elliot Spitzer in today’s State of the State speech could mean good news for the North Country.

“Adirondack voices have been calling out, and it is encouraging that the Governor is listening carefully,” Rugge said. He cited efforts made last year to increase awareness about the problems of providing health care in rural areas such as the Adirondacks.

“Regional leaders, including elected officials, business interests and environmentalists, convened late last summer to address the growing threats to health care in rural, northern New York. These leaders, along with the New York State Association of Counties, sent a strong message to the Governor that health care is in big trouble and that it is time for bold leadership. The Governor listened, and today has outlined what he plans to deliver.

“The Governor is proposing a multi-pronged approach that includes grants to doctors settling in areas where the need is highest, loan forgiveness for these doctors to repay medical school debts, and improved reimbursement rates for health care services that will make professional practice possible.

“These plans are a good start. We now eagerly await the Governor’s budget message, due in a few weeks, to see if these good intentions are matched by the necessary resources. Equally important, we need the Legislature to be deeply engaged with these initiatives. They are vital to our rural communities, and thankfully our local state representatives have made health care a top priority.”