

THURSDAY'S THOUGHTS

From Suffolk County Legislator

William R. Spencer, M.D.



GREETINGS 18TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT RESIDENTS!

**– Greenlawn – Centerport – Northport – Asharoken – Eaton's Neck – Huntington – Halesite –
– Huntington Bay – Huntington Station – Lloyd Harbor – Cold Spring Harbor – East Northport –**

Dear Neighbor,

Upon reviewing the Executive's recommended budget, the Legislature is faced with extremely difficult decisions. With a deficit exceeding \$100 million dollars, combined with our obligation to provide essential services to the 1.5 million residents, there is much to weigh.

In recent years, the legislature has saved \$300 million by avoiding the cost of building a jail, reduced payroll by \$100 million with 1300 less employees, and saved \$77 million dollars over 5 years by privatizing our health centers. Additionally, we closed the Foley Nursing Home saving \$12 million annually and merged the offices of Suffolk County Treasurer and Comptroller resulting in a savings of \$3 million. We have taken these proactive steps while holding the line and freezing property taxes for 5 consecutive years. Despite the strides we have made we continue to face a deficit, and must make further cuts to our vital services that we all benefit from.

Reducing expenses is necessary, but I urge my colleagues to avoid making cuts that will cost us more in the long run. The Executive's recommended budget includes the loss of 2 programs that I firmly oppose cutting; the Public Health Nursing program and the Health Education and Tobacco Control Program. The elimination of the programs will cost us far more than the projected saving for 2017, and will have profound effects for generations to come.

Our Public Health Nurses serve our most vulnerable populations. In Suffolk County we have one of the highest rates of babies born exposed to opiates. Our nurses are on the frontlines of this epidemic as they are treating addicted mothers and their babies, helping to prevent this drug scourge from carrying on to the next generation. Considering our deficits, expenses have to be reduced however; in this case we are not prepared to remove this safety net as the existing agencies are not in the position to serve these complex cases. In working with the Public Health Nurses, I have come up with a proposal to reinstate the program for 2017 and have presented the proposal to my colleagues. I firmly believe we can continue to provide these services while finding the needed savings.

Another critical program on the chopping block, which is equally as important to public health in Suffolk, is the Tobacco Control Program. This cut will make a small dent into our deficit, yielding \$188,000 in funds for the county. Compare that to the \$10.39 billion dollars in health care costs and the \$7.33 billion dollars in productivity losses in New York State directly caused by smoking each year. The mission of this program is to prevent disease. It is indisputable that when we prevent disease we save money and save lives. We can preserve this program through vigorous pursuit of existing state aid opportunities.

These are your services; I urge all residents to stay engaged through this budget process and I welcome any questions or comments. Please feel free to call my office at 631-854-4500.

Best Regards,

~Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D.

Forum Highlights Need for Additional Support & Research into Rare Diseases



From left to right: Legislator Sarah Anker, Town of Brookhaven Councilwoman Valerie Cartright and Legislator William Spencer, M.D.

On Saturday, October 15th, numerous advocates, healthcare professionals, community members and leaders gathered at the Hilton Garden Inn in Stony Brook for the 1st Annual Rare Disease Forum. The event, which was hosted by Sarcoidosis of Long Island and Stony Brook University Hospital, highlighted the struggles, accomplishments and needs of patients and caregivers living with the effects of a rare disease. Suffolk County Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. was privileged to join forces with his colleague Legislator Sarah Anker to speak in support of the 25-30 million Americans collectively battling nearly 7,000 rare diseases.

“By nature of a disease being rare, patients are faced with a lack of greater understanding and general knowledge of what their challenges are. Our effort here today is to reverse that and build awareness throughout our communities and networks. Although each disease presents unique and different symptoms and struggles for patients, these diseases all have a common thread; in fact 80% of rare diseases are genetic in origin. Forming coalitions in support of research, education, and awareness for rare diseases is crucial to helping these patients live comfortably. Together we have greater influence.” said Legislator Spencer.

In the United States, a rare disease is defined as a condition that affects fewer than 200,000 individuals. Currently, 8% to 10% of the population, or one of every ten to twelve persons, has a rare disease. For most of these conditions, there are no treatments, guidelines, or individual advocacy groups to assist patients and clinicians in disease management. The rare disease community has made significant strides over the years in getting legislation passed to provide research grants to clinicians and scientists on how to manage these conditions and moving forward development of pharmaceuticals to aid in treatment.

Huntington Station Halloween Family Day



Sunday, October 23rd at 1:00pm

At the Walt Whitman Birthplace State Historic Site, 246 Old Walt Whitman Road

Magician, costume prizes, guided tours, and more.

For more information, call 631-427-5240, ext. 113 or visit www.waltwhitman.org



Registration for Fall Classes is Open Now!

SeniorNet is a national, volunteer, not-for-profit organization. Their mission is to provide computer and technology classes for adults aged 50+. They offer a wide range of computer-based and mobile device courses, from beginner to expert to everything in between.

Enrollment for SeniorNet classes is easy. You may call; visit their office to register in person; or mail in your registration form and payment. Registration is ongoing throughout the semester until the class is full.

WHERE: **SeniorNet at FSL, Huntington**
Family Service League Building
790 Park Ave, Huntington, NY 11743

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 9:30am – 12:00pm

For more information: Call 631-470-6757 or 631-470-6922 or e-mail: information@seniornetli.org.
To Browse Available Classes, visit: <http://www.seniornetli.org/curriculum/fall-2016/huntington-fall-2016/>.

Huntington Village Art Walk



Saturday, October 22nd from 2:00pm – 7:00pm

A self-guided tour, full of Art, Food and Drink! Meet the Artists, enjoy refreshments and enter raffle to win valuable gift baskets. Click here for more info and map!

Locations on the Walk:

- Heckscher Museum of Art – 2 Prime Avenue – heckscher.org
 - Huntington Arts Council – 213 Main Street – huntingtonarts.org
 - Huntington Historical Society – 228 Main Street – huntingtonhistoricalsociety.org
 - Eileen Kathryn Boyd Interiors – 251 Main Street – ekbinteriors.com
 - B.j. spoke gallery – 299 Main Street – bjspokegallery.org
 - LaunchPad Huntington – 315 Main Street, 2nd Floor – launchpadhuntington.com
 - Huntington Art Center – 11 Wall Street – Huntingtonartcenter.com
 - Fotofoto gallery and the Moon Rose – 14 West Carver Street – fotofotogallery.org
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Councilwoman Tracey A. Edwards
 and the
Town of Huntington Women's Services
 in partnership with
Huntington Hospital Northwell Health



Presents Our First Women's Health Empowerment Series
Tuesday, October 25, 2016 - 7:00 pm
 Huntington Town Hall, 100 Main Street, Huntington



Panel Speakers: Birjis Akhund, MD - Joyce Davis, RN - Kathy Giffuni, RN
Loretta Lawrence, MD - Donna Marie Schneider, MD
Faisal Siddiqui, MD - Heather Zinkin, MD

Topic: Breast Health

<i>Genetics</i>	<i>Nurse Navigation</i>	<i>Nutrition</i>
<i>Screening Exams</i>	<i>Risk Assessment & Factors</i>	<i>Radiology</i>
<i>Surgery & Radiation Treatment Options & Side Effects</i>		
<i>Role of Estrogen in Women's Health</i>	<i>Questions & Answers</i>	

Additional Information for Free Breast Cancer Screening will be provided

For more information, please call 631-351-3175

Light Refreshments will be served

Quote of the Week...



Sincerely,

William R. Spencer, M.D.

Suffolk County Legislator
18th Legislative District

Feel free to stop by my office or contact me by e-mail, william.spencer@suffolkcountyny.gov, or by phone at (631)854-4500. Like receiving Thursday's Thought? Be sure to tell your friends about it!

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, e-mail jennifer.mish@suffolkcountyny.gov.