

## **HEALTH CARE**

The Health Care sector, already the second largest employer in the North Country generating \$1.4 billion in annual economic activity, will continue to be an integral part of leading the renaissance of New York State's small cities and rural communities. A vital health care sector is a key part of a healthy region with a healthy economy.

Like other industry sectors, health care is in a transition period. For facilities and providers in rural and remote areas such as the North Country, this transition is much more challenging than in metro regions. Resources have been and will continue to be more limited, and this will continue to be the case as the reimbursement structure for health care undergoes expected changes and contractions. Rural health care must somehow provide access to a full range of health care services, yet without the critical mass of numbers to readily support such services and providers.

At the same time, we must find ways to also effectively link the region's outstanding array of health care institutions and providers with its rich history as a center for healthy lifestyles, recuperation and research, thereby generating new forms of investment and job creation related to health and health care.

**STRATEGY 1:** Support and encourage new and expanded forms of collaborations, alliances and affiliations among the region's health care providers as a means of preserving and enhancing access to various forms of health care, achieving efficiencies and savings, and furthering the quest for the highest possible performance for patients

### **Strategy 1 Actions Year 2-5:**

- Encourage and maintain communications with the region's hospitals and major health care providers, offering encouragement and support whenever appropriate.

**STRATEGY 2:** Support continued access to vital health care services in small communities and rural areas of the North Country, including the Adirondacks

### **Strategy 2 Actions Year 2-5:**

- In addition to opportunities inherent in Strategy 1, support new and creative approaches that can help to sustain the continued viability and vitality of community hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and other health services where they are most challenged.
- Support continuing efforts to achieve affordable access to broadband in unserved or underserved areas of the North Country, including the Adirondacks, recognizing the vital role that 21st century communications technology can increasingly play in the delivery of health care services in rural and remote areas.
- Support policies, programs and actions designed to assist with the successful recruitment and retention of physicians and other health care professionals across the North Country.

- Support the continuation and enhancement of educational and training programs within the North Country designed to support the health care sector. This must include a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary network of services ranging from BOCES through degree programs, as well as such opportunities as residency programs for physicians.

**STRATEGY 3:** Support and promote the attraction and generation of new and expanded health care services in the North Country which can result in new economic activity and job creation, particularly opportunities connected with the existing array of institutions and services and the region's historic role in healthy lifestyles and recuperation. This should include specialized services aimed at niche populations, including but not limited to our armed services and veterans.

**Strategy 3 Actions Year 2-5:**

- Attract and generate additional investment and employment in areas such as Saranac Lake as well as in the Fort Drum area and elsewhere, related to special rehabilitative and other services for wounded warriors, veterans and their families.