



*Representing the advocacy interests
of hospitals and health systems on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley*

OPPOSITION

MEMORANDUM

May 17, 2017

TO: Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan
Senate Coalition Co-Leader Jeffrey Klein
Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie
Members, Long Island Delegation of the New York State Legislature
Members, Hudson Valley Delegation of the New York State Legislature
Members, Independent Democratic Conference

FROM: Kevin W. Dahill, President and CEO

RE: A.3339 (Weinstein)

A.3339 would amend the current statute of limitations for medical, dental, and podiatric malpractice lawsuits by establishing a “discovery” rule. This would delay the start of the statute of limitations period until the discovery of the act, for up to 10 years after the injury. **The Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State strongly opposes this legislation.**

This legislation would dramatically expand the period of time in which malpractice lawsuits can be filed. Under current law, plaintiffs have two and one-half years from either the date of the injury or the date of the last treatment for which there has been continuous treatment of the injury. The proposed legislation would create a “discovery of injury” rule, which would allow the plaintiff to file suit two and one-half years from the date that s/he knew or should have known of the injury, for up to 10 years. The veracity and level of detail of the testimony that will be given a decade after the injury is questionable at best. Furthermore, this would broaden the field of stale lawsuits that could be brought, which inevitably would result in significant increases in malpractice insurance premiums.

Hospitals in the suburban regions already pay some of the highest malpractice premiums in the country, and costs continue to rise. This increases the cost of care for consumers, employers and the state, while physicians leave New York to practice elsewhere. We need true reform that balances the rights of patients to receive fair compensation against the need for rational procedures and limitations that keep premiums affordable. Regrettably, A.3339 will take New York even farther from achieving this goal.

For these reasons, the Suburban Hospital Alliance urges your opposition to this legislation.