



MAYOR CHRIS BOLLWAGE

# CITY OF ELIZABETH PRESS RELEASE



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## **MAYOR BOLLWAGE OUTRAGED BY PROVISION TO STRIP HEALTH CARE CHOICES FROM ALL PUBLIC EMPLOYEES**

*City of Elizabeth Mayor Chris Bollwage will challenge Health Care provision's legality*

**Elizabeth, NJ, June 17, 2011**—Mayor Chris Bollwage denounced the provision in the Health Care Legislation, which would bar public workers from using out-of-state hospitals unless there "is no in-state health care provider reasonably available to treat the particular condition."

"It is unconscionable that Trenton would allow a provision that limits hundreds of thousands of public employees and their families the right to seek the best medical care," stated Mayor Bollwage. "This provision is an insult to hard working middle-class government employees who will have to compromise their personal and families' wellbeing."

This provision infers that an individual's healthcare and ultimately quality of life are only as valuable as the services that can be provided within New Jersey. It is irrational to contemplate that expertise and experience are relative to one geographic area. Specific resources and proven techniques have been established throughout the United States and the world, and the same logic should be applied to the accessibility of the best and brightest healthcare providers.

Mayor Bollwage pointed to the fact that if the provision is not amended, families facing cancer illness could not seek treatment in any of the top 10 cancer centers\* in the United States, including: Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center or Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Families with ailing aging family members could not send their loved ones to any of the top 10 geriatric hospitals\* in the United States, including: Mount Sinai Medical Center or New York-Presbyterian University Hospital of Columbia and Cornell.

State employees with ill children will not be allowed to seek medical treatment in the Country's best pediatric hospitals\*, including: St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Children Hospital Boston, and Children Hospital of Philadelphia.

"Health Care Legislation should provide adequate coverage to government employees, while allowing participants to choose the best facilities for their families," said Bollwage. "Denying employees these basic rights is un-American and a slap in the face for the hard working, middle-class public employees of New Jersey."

The Senate Budget Committee approved the plan yesterday. It now moves on to the full Senate and Assembly Budget Committee on Monday and the full Assembly will vote next Thursday.

Mayor Bollwage has asked the City's Attorney to pursue the legality of the provision as it applies to interstate commerce and other legal requirements. The Mayor will also contact local Union leaders to join in the lawsuit in an effort to protect the rights of all middle-class government workers and their families.

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\* Information according to U.S. News and World Reporting 2011 Best Hospitals issue