

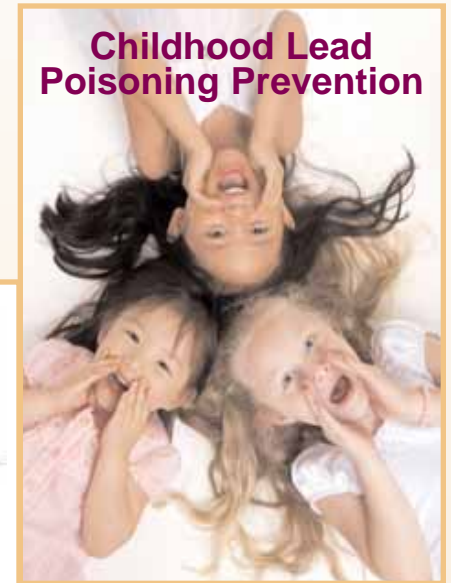


Andrew J. Spano, Westchester County Executive  
County Board of Legislators

# Westchester County Department of Health

Budget Report  
November 2008

Submitted to Westchester County Board of Legislators



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
**Joshua Lipsman, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Commissioner**

# THE THREE CORE FUNCTIONS & ESSENTIAL SERVICES OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## **Assessment**

- Monitor health status to identify community health problems.
- Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
- Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.

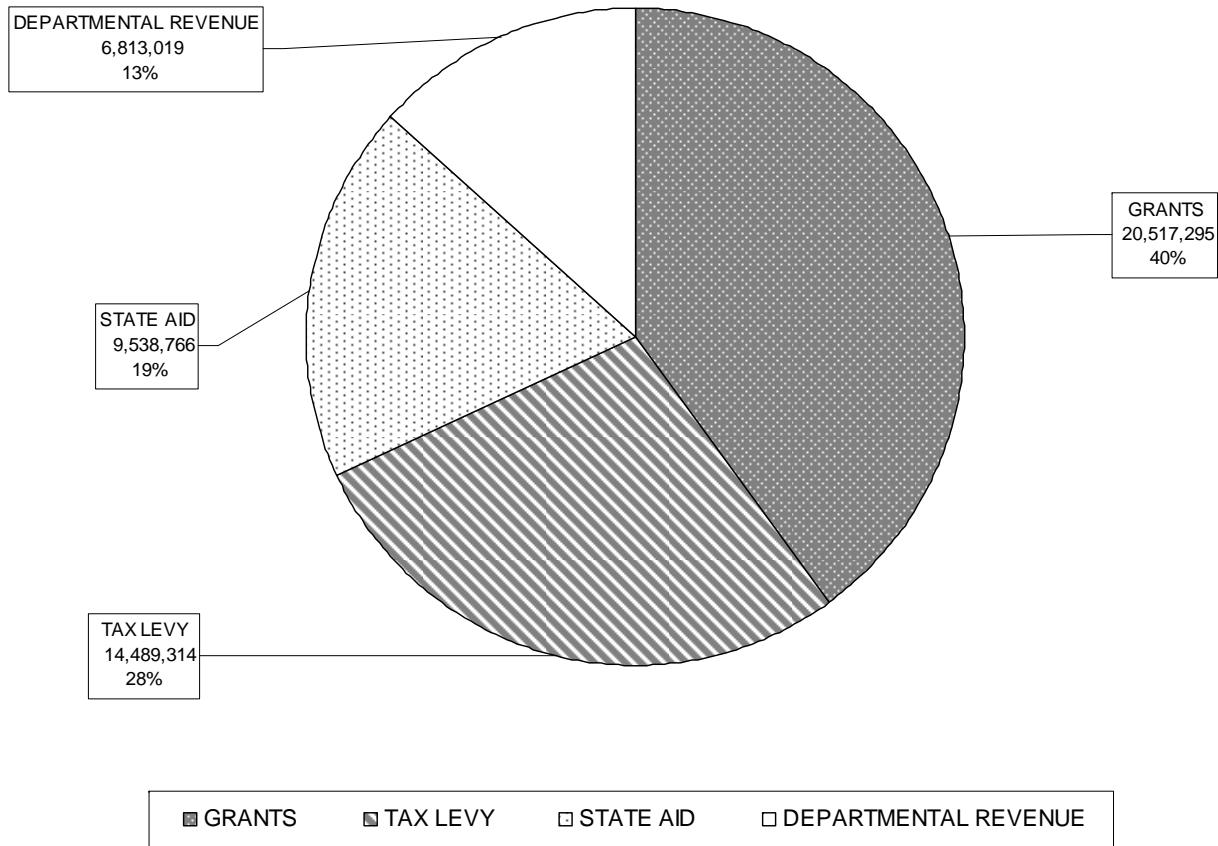
## **Policy Development**

- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
- Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
- Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

## **Assurance**

- Link people to needed health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
- Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce.
- Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
- Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.

### WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPT. OF HEALTH PROPOSED BUDGET - 2009



# NUTRITION & FITNESS

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*A Health Department survey of 8,600 Westchester elementary school children in grades K, 2 and 4 revealed that more than one in three children (34%) is either overweight or at risk of overweight. This is greater than the national rate of 32.2%. Westchester is addressing the obesity epidemic through multiple programs:*

## **Be Fit Westchester**

- Promotes healthy lifestyles at Department of Parks events, community health fairs, and school events.

## **Fit Kids**

- Nearly 63,000 children in 104 schools, or 43.9% of students in 43.5% of schools, participate in healthier behaviors as outlined in the Fit Kids Resource Guide.
- Fit Kids schools, with Health Department guidance, have made their school lunches more nutritious.

## **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program**

- For fiscal year 2008, the WIC caseload was 8,445 and the program served 102% of its target.
- Generated over \$6 million into the local economy through the redemption of WIC checks.
- Conduct weekly “Fit WIC” healthy food demonstrations and issue incentive items to promote increased physical activity, improved nutrition and portion control.

## **Westchester Employee Health & Wellness**

- The Health Department has helped the County Executive’s Office develop a comprehensive Employee Health & Wellness Program.
- Through this initiative, County employees have participated in Weight Watchers at Work and smoking cessation programs at no cost to them, a Walking Works club at lunch time and have access to an online “Wellness Center” which offers many resources and information to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- Online support groups for weight loss and smoking cessation have also been launched.

# CHRONIC DISEASES

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## **Statistics**

- Heart disease, stroke, and other diseases of the circulatory system were the number one cause of all hospitalizations for Westchester County residents, accounting for 17,946 hospitalizations, in 2006.
- Cardiovascular disease was the leading cause of death among Westchester County residents, accounting for 39.4% of the total deaths in 2005.
- Diabetes was a factor in 16.7% of all hospitalizations of Westchester County residents in 2006.

## **Chronic Disease Prevention Initiatives**

The Health Department, along with the County Departments of Communication, Senior Services, and Parks are working to reduce chronic disease. Efforts include partnering with faith based organizations and other community and medical partners to:

- help identify residents with heart disease and diabetes and get them into care;
- to encourage healthy lifestyles, good nutrition and physical activity;
- to integrate free health screenings and healthy food options into community and cultural events, such as soul food and Caribbean cookouts and health fairs;
- partnering with the Hudson Valley Association of Housing Authorities, the African American Men of Westchester, the Westchester Medical Center and other partners to provide free health screenings and health education for seniors, adolescents and adults living at municipal housing sites.

## **It's My Healthcare**

- Launched in 2008 as a joint initiative of Westchester County and representatives of the County's medical community to encourage residents to become active partners with their healthcare professionals to improve their health.
- More than 16,000 residents have read the brochures, viewed the website or video or seen a presentation about this program in English or Spanish.

# HEALTH DISPARITIES

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Based on the priorities in the County Executive's Blue Ribbon Task Force for the Elimination of Health Disparities among African Americans report, ***Health Disparities Among Blacks in Westchester: A Snapshot***:

- In 2008, Westchester County is providing \$50,000 in grant funds to community and faith-based agencies for programs that:
  - Link more Black residents to needed health care through education, outreach, and referral;
  - Provide residents with assistance and information to navigate the health care system more effectively.
- A Mentoring Initiative to promote careers in the health professions to students of color has been developed. More than 800 students have been involved in Mentoring initiative activities. Approximately 40 black health professionals have participated as mentors, providing 20 students with one-on-one meeting opportunities.
- On October 18, 2008, Westchester County hosted "Rx for Success: Dare to Be a Doctor" at the County Center. Over five hundred middle and high school students participated, interacting with more than 20 prominent African-American and Hispanic physicians, who shared their experiences and inspiring stories.

# HIV and AIDS PREVENTION & SERVICES

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*The AIDS epidemic continues to affect disproportionately certain geographic regions and high-risk segments of the population. Outside of New York City, Westchester is the New York State county with the most people living with AIDS and HIV.*

- In Westchester County, more than 3,800 people are reported living with HIV and AIDS. It is also estimated that 1,000 residents in Westchester are undiagnosed but have HIV or AIDS.
- Increasing numbers of middle-aged women of color are being infected through heterosexual transmission.

Westchester County Health Department has implemented new initiatives to prevent and treat new cases of HIV and AIDS:

- The Health Department partners with community-based organizations and coalitions to provide HIV Prevention education and free rapid HIV testing at community and cultural events and other nontraditional sites such as faith-based organizations, housing projects, supermarket parking lots and sports clubs.
- To reach African-Americans new HIV outreach pilot program has launched to bring HIV prevention education and testing to 10 hair salons and barber shops that serve the African-American community. Some will host HIV testing events. A kickoff event will be held at a hair salon in New Rochelle in late November.

The Health Department administers \$5.5 million in federal Ryan White Title I CARE Act funds for community-based health and supportive services for persons with AIDS in Westchester, Rockland and Putnam Counties.

# STD PREVENTION & SERVICES

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*Cases of syphilis and Chlamydia, two of the three sexually transmitted diseases (STD) that are monitored under New York State Public Health Law, have been steadily increasing over the past few years.*

- In 2007, the number of Westchester County residents with:
  - early syphilis, the most contagious type, increased to 57, compared to 29 cases in 2006 and 22 cases in 2005. This marked increase in early syphilis cases has also been seen in New York City and elsewhere.
  - *Chlamydia trachomatis* infections increased to 2,465 compared to 2,144 in 2006 and 1,676 in 2005.
  
- The Health Department responses to these increases include:
  - Teaching residents at high risk about STD prevention through events at housing projects, churches, health fairs and festivals;
  - Educating the medical community to follow STD screening, testing, and treatment guidelines;
  - Aggressively managing and investigating cases to ensure all infected residents are treated, and identifying, evaluating and treating exposed partners/contacts;
  - Initiating Internet Partner Notification, to reach anonymous sexual partners of infected residents through internet chat rooms;
  - Providing more than 10,000 teens a year with information about how to prevent STDs and refer them for needed screenings through the TeenAWARE program;
  - Providing free STD screenings at dozens of events throughout the year through a partnership with the Westchester Medical Center mobile van;

# CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION

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Lead paint, lead dust, lead in toys, jewelry, candy and folk medicines endangers Westchester County's children.

## **The Health Department's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program:**

- monitors and tracks more than 31,000 blood lead screening tests performed on children;
- managed and supervised the treatment and home environment remediation for 33 lead poisoned children in 2007;
- provides information on the Lead Safe Westchester program to help property owners reduce lead paint hazards to create a safer environment for children;
- educate medical providers of children and pregnant women to ensure blood lead testing of at risk populations;
- train contractors and landlords on how to safely remove lead paint;
- received a new \$293,790 state grant to identify lead hazards in homes in the 10701 zip code to prevent children from becoming poisoned by lead paint.
- inspected 480 homes and supervised the replacement of 650 lead contaminated windows from one apartment building between October 1, 2007 and September 30, 2008.
- Assisted the Departments of Consumer Protection and Laboratories & Research with the testing and analysis of lead tainted jewelry that was being sold in Westchester stores.

# TOBACCO USE PREVENTION

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*"The adverse health effects from cigarette smoking account for 440,000 deaths, or nearly 1 of every 5 deaths, each year in the United States." (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)*

## **ATUPA (Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act):**

- There were 104 legal actions and 17 vendors had their tobacco licenses suspended in 2007 after being caught selling cigarettes to minors by Health Department inspectors who made 4,032 enforcement checks accompanied by minors.
- During the first half of 2008, a total of 1,726 checks resulted in 33 legal actions with 7 license suspensions.
- Enforcement has paid off: compliance by tobacco vendors has gone from 52% in 1997 to 98% today.

## **Worksite Smoking Law:**

- The Health Department enforces the County's worksite smoking law.
- In 2007, 68 workplace complaints resulted in 9 legal actions, down from 2005 and 2006 which saw over 100 complaints each year.

## **Community Presentations:**

- The Chronic Disease Prevention Program has made more than 25 presentations to schools and community agencies about the dangers of smoking.

## **Partnerships:**

- The Health Department is a member of the steering committee of the POW'R against Tobacco Coalition, a four county tobacco prevention coalition. The Health Department and POW'R sent a joint mailing to Westchester County vendors to encourage them to eliminate point-of-purchase tobacco advertising.

# ANIMAL VECTOR CONTROL

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Tick borne diseases, West Nile Virus and rabies are endemic threats to the health of Westchester residents.

## **Tick borne Diseases:**

- Surveillance, public outreach and education are the most cost effective methods for tracking and preventing tick borne diseases such as Lyme disease, Ehrlichiosis and Babesiosis.
- For 2008, presentations and/or materials have been provided for 28 events reaching approximately 3,300 people.
- In addition, educational materials are provided to local, county and state parks and the bow hunter association.

## **West Nile Virus:**

- Health Department staff evaluated and as needed treated 66,818 catch basins with larvicide.
- 477 mosquito batches were collected and analyzed in 2008. 11 mosquito batches contained mosquitoes infected with WNV.

## **Rabies:**

- In 2007, Health Department staff documented and followed up on 1,068 bites and analyzed 617 animals for rabies.
- Of the animals tested, 31 were positive for rabies (9 bats, 1 cat, 1 fox, 15 raccoons, and 5 skunks).
- Life-saving rabies prophylaxis was provided to 332 county residents.

# ENSURING FOOD SAFETY

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## **Food Service Establishment Inspection Policy:**

- 11,700 inspections of 3,600 restaurants were made in 2007.
- In addition to issuing a summons, health inspectors now also issue a printed closure warning notice if violations are found on a re-inspection that were previously found on the original inspection.

## **Tran-Fat Cooking Oil Ban:**

- A new ban on the use of trans-fat cooking oils at all food service establishments began on 1/9/08.
- Since the effective date, compliance has been close to 100%.
- After a 90-day grace period, eight restaurants of 3,000 inspected were found using the banned cooking oils as of October 23.

## **Food Allergies:**

- Nearly 50,000 Westchester residents have food allergies; many of them life-threatening.
- The Board of Health has passed a draft code change that would require all food service establishments to post a uniform allergy warning statement on the menu.
- If the code is adopted, the warning will read "If you have a food allergy, please speak to the owner, manager, chef or your server."

# PROTECTING DRINKING & RECREATIONAL WATERS

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- The Health Department protects Westchester's waters by providing oversight of almost 60 sewage treatment plants, whose flows range up to 100 million gallons per day. This oversight ensures that all plants operate in accordance with their state and local operating permits.
- Through September of 2008, Health Department staff inspected 130 septic systems and approved plans for 160 new septic systems.
- 270 Septic System Contractors currently maintain licenses through the Health Department Septic System Management Program to install and repair septic systems.
- A new Septic Collector Law, which went into effect on January 24, 2008, requires that anyone who evacuates and transports septage be licensed and report information regarding the evacuation. As of October 2008, 115 Septage Collectors are licensed. The data reported on the form provides valuable insight on the condition of septic systems and all reports of surface wetness prompt an investigation by field staff. Site investigations have led to the repair of dozens of failing systems in the first half of 2008.
- Through September of 2008, 420 private wells have been tested in accordance with the new Private Well Water Testing Law, effective November 19, 2007. This law requires that private drinking water wells be tested for sanitary and aesthetic water quality upon the sale or lease of a property. Further, the law requires remediation, if necessary, to establish safe levels of contaminants in the well water supply.

# ENSURING SAFE HANDLING OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

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## **Petroleum Bulk Storage (PBS):**

- The Health Department routinely inspects 7,169 registered petroleum storage tanks located at 2,704 facilities to ensure they are being operated in a manner that protects the facility occupants, neighbors and the environment.
- In 2007, administrative charges were brought against 269 facilities for code violations and the Board of Health assessed a total of \$510,350 in fines.

## **Gasoline Vapor Recovery:**

- The Board of Health has passed a draft code that would authorize Health Department staff to inspect and enforce gasoline vapor recovery systems in 700 gasoline dispensing facilities in the county.
- If local code is adopted, the DEC is expected to delegate authority to the Health Department to regulate the containment and recovery of vapors at gasoline stations.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## 2008 Highlights

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### **Drills & Exercises**

Drills and exercises help Health Department staff practice emergency response roles which they may be called upon to play in a large scale public health emergency. This year, the Health Department participated in a week-long Hurricane Response Exercise with county, State and community-based agencies.

### **Staff Development**

The Health Department continuously works to enhance the emergency preparedness skills of our staff through staff development. In 2008, this included teaching staff to identify and refer individuals who may be in need of psychological first aid, radiological response training, avian influenza response training and respiratory protection training.



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# Children with Special Needs

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# **Children with Special Needs (CSN)**

CSN includes two large program mandates that serve young children with developmental delays and disabilities:

Early Intervention Program (EIP) – serves infants and toddlers from birth to 3 years of age

4410 Preschool Education Program (PEP) – serves preschoolers 3 and 4 years of age

# Services

Services may include speech, occupational and/or physical therapy, special education, counseling and family training, and other supportive services.

In accordance with federal law, services are provided to the extent appropriate in a child's natural setting or the least restrictive setting. Between 1993 and 2008, the percentage of Westchester children served in a home/community setting increased:

- from 55% to 85% in the Early Intervention Program
- from 31% to 74% in the 4410 Preschool Program

## **Program Growth**

*It is projected that 10,664 children will receive services during SY08/09 at a cost of \$118 million. From SY03/04 to SY08/09, the number of children served and program costs increased as follows:*

### **Early Intervention Program:**

The number of children receiving services is estimated to increase by 12% from 5878 to 6558.

The cost of the program increased 3% from \$40 million to \$41 million.

### **4410 Preschool Education Program:**

The number of children receiving services is estimated to increase by 8% from 3788 to 4106.

The cost of the program increased 38% from \$56 million to \$77 million.

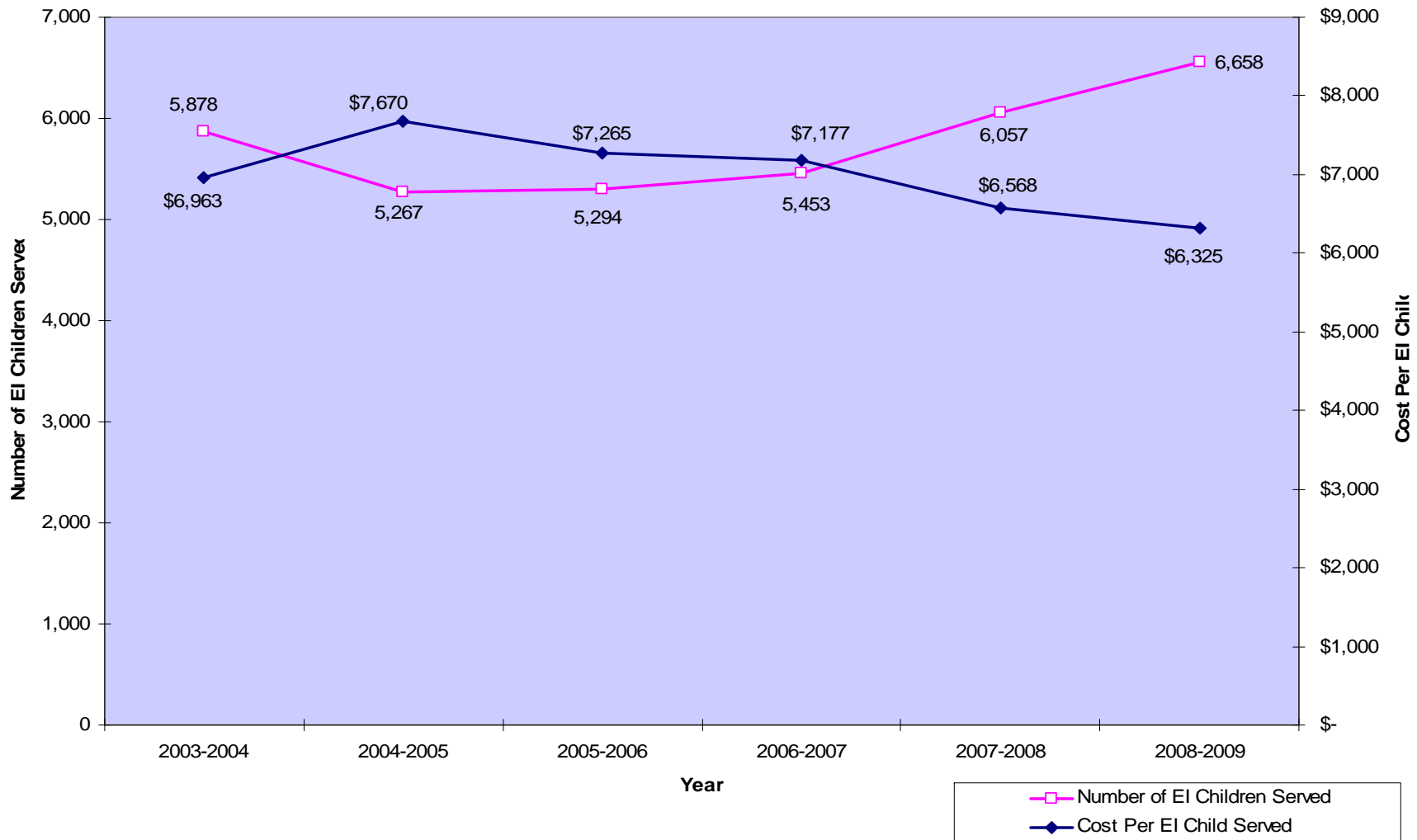
## **Cost per child**

The cost of services per child in PEP is three times higher than in EIP.

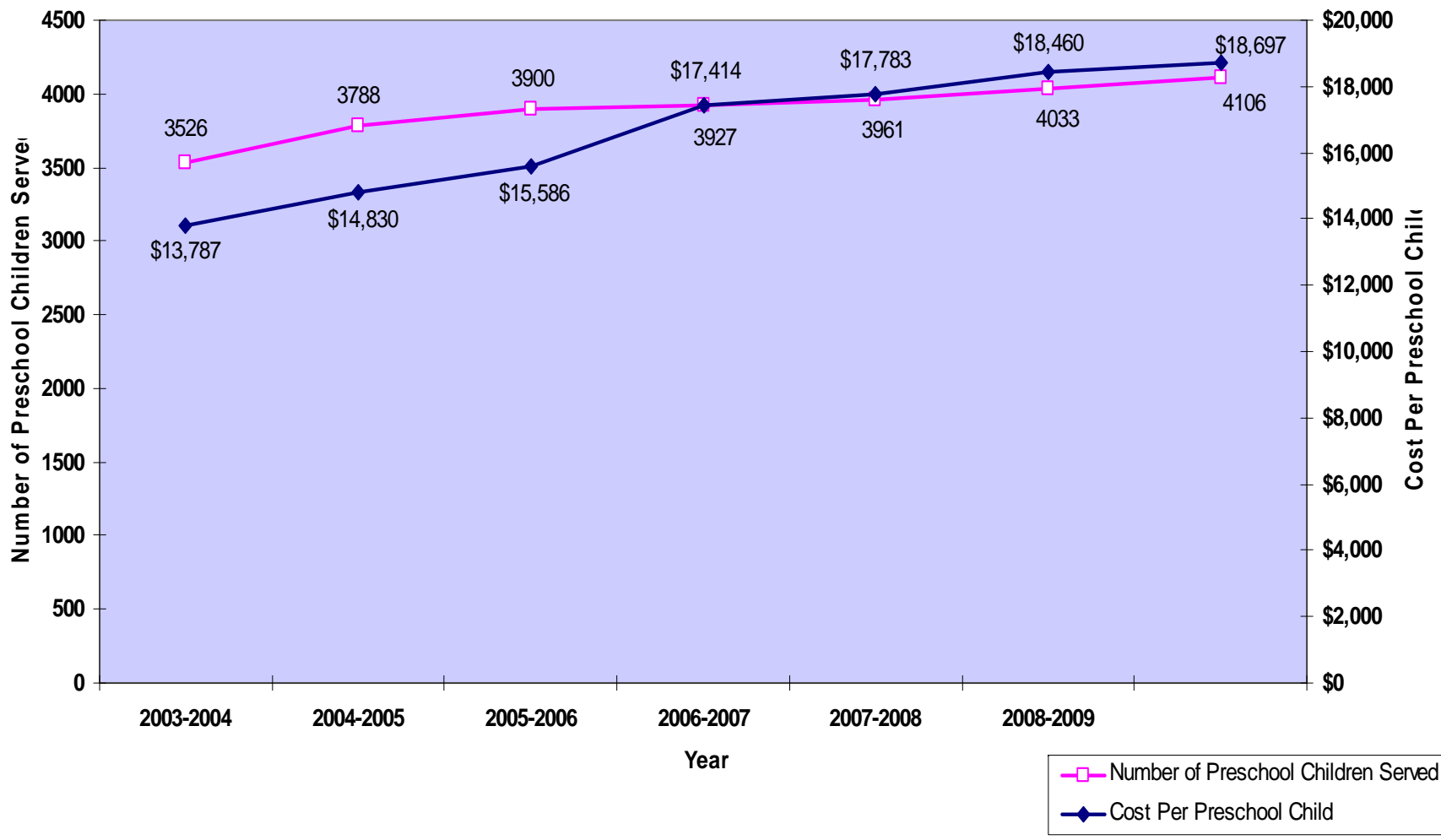
The County has the authority to make service decisions in EIP but not in PEP. Quality and satisfaction with services have not been compromised.

From SY03/04 to SY08/09, the cost per child in EIP is estimated to decrease by 9% (from \$6,963 per child to \$6,325), while the cost per child in PEP to increase by 26% (from \$14,830 to \$18,697 per child).

**Westchester County Early Intervention Program  
Program Year: 2003-2004 to 2008-2009  
Number of Children Served and Cost Per Child**



**Westchester County Preschool Program**  
**Program Year: 2003 - 2004 to 2008 - 2009**  
**Number of Children Served and Cost Per child**



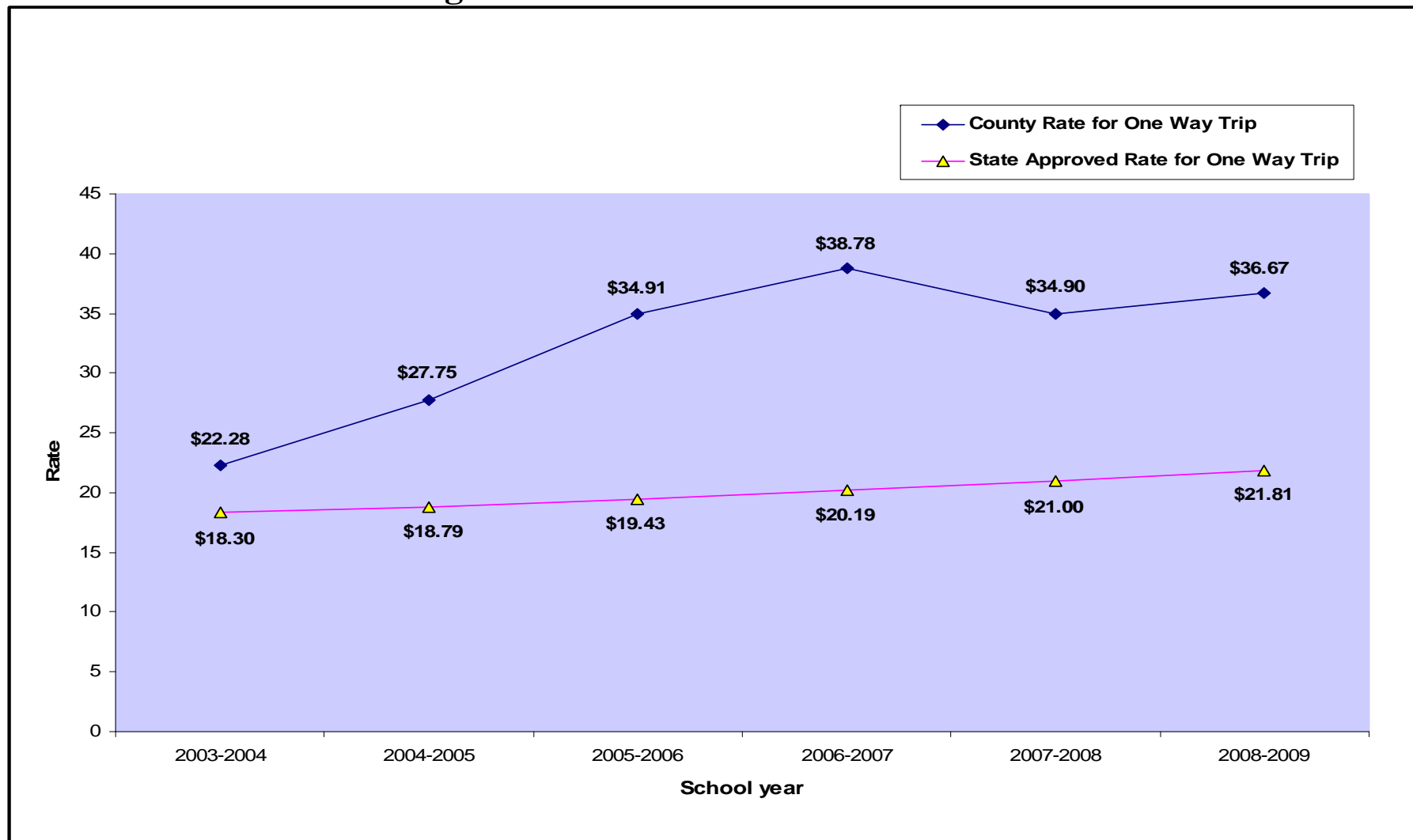
# Transportation Costs

The cost of transporting children continues to increase due to the rising costs of fuel, insurance, personnel, and vehicle maintenance. Overall, costs for a one way trip in SY 08/09 will be 65% higher than in SY03/04.

Due to the New York State Education Department's cap on state aid for transportation costs, Westchester's effective rate of reimbursement has decreased from 59.5%, to only 33% per round trip in SY08/09. In SY 08/09, this cap is expected to shift \$4.6 million to County tax levy share.

# Westchester County Preschool Transportation Costs – County Rate and State Approved Rate

## Program Year: 2003-2004 to 2008-2009



# Quality Improvement Initiatives

Administrative initiatives to ensure quality of services, provider accountability and contractual compliance among the 250 contracted providers include:

- Ongoing program and fiscal audits;
- Intensive reviews of evaluations and service plans to ensure ongoing program eligibility;
- Rigorous staff supervision to ensure adherence to regulatory standards;
- Provider training, including dissemination of guidance memoranda, best practice guidelines, and hands-on training and observation.

## Children with Special Needs Number of Children Served and Total Program Expenditures

School Year <sup>1</sup>	Early Intervention			Preschool			Total
	Number of Children	Program Expenditures	Cost Per Child	Number of Children	Program Expenditures	Cost Per Child	Program Expenditures
1990 - 1991	265	\$4,233,857	\$15,977	955	\$14,318,302	\$14,993	\$18,552,159
1991 - 1992	255	\$4,737,916	\$18,580	1040	\$15,539,443	\$14,942	\$20,277,359
1992 - 1993	385	\$4,467,516	\$11,604	1356	\$16,666,396	\$12,291	\$21,133,912
1993 - 1994 <sup>2</sup>	894	\$5,110,862	\$5,717	1621	\$20,390,210	\$12,579	\$25,501,072
1994 - 1995	1571	\$7,813,635	\$4,974	1881	\$22,908,233	\$12,179	\$30,721,868
1995 - 1996	2002	\$9,758,357	\$4,874	1861	\$23,069,208	\$12,396	\$32,827,565
1996 - 1997	2453	\$14,028,003	\$5,719	2280	\$25,883,261	\$11,352	\$39,911,264
1997 - 1998	2987	\$18,220,119	\$6,100	2523	\$27,882,639	\$11,051	\$46,102,758
1998 - 1999	3512	\$22,556,602	\$6,423	2601	\$29,905,132	\$11,498	\$52,471,734
1999 - 2000	4261	\$28,095,867	\$6,594	2900	\$34,446,338	\$11,877	\$62,539,205
2000 - 2001	4915	\$31,648,910	\$6,439	3183	\$38,892,326	\$12,219	\$70,541,236
2001 - 2002	5510	\$36,246,422	\$6,578	3388	\$43,650,016	\$12,884	\$79,896,438
2002 - 2003	5941	\$40,213,419	\$6,769	3525	\$48,599,185	\$13,787	\$88,812,604
2003 -2004	5878	\$40,931,346	\$6,963	3788	\$56,176,988	\$14,830	\$97,108,334
2004 - 2005	5267	\$40,398,185	\$7,670	3900	\$60,786,352	\$15,586	\$101,184,537
2005 - 2006 <sup>3</sup>	5294	\$38,461,164	\$7,265	3927	\$68,386,152	\$17,414	\$106,847,316
2006 - 2007 <sup>3</sup>	5446	\$39,085,265	\$7,177	3961	\$70,437,743	\$17,783	\$109,523,008
2007 - 2008 <sup>4</sup>	5976	\$39,251,920	\$6,568	4033	\$74,447,425	\$18,460	\$113,699,345
2008 - 2009 <sup>4</sup>	6558	\$41,474,039	\$6,325	4106	\$76,775,555	\$18,697	\$118,249,594

<sup>1</sup> School year is July 1 through June 30 of the following year. <sup>2</sup> Early Intervention Program became effective as of July 1, 1993 and took over the Family Court Program

<sup>3</sup> Updated  
10/16/08

<sup>4</sup> Estimated

## **LEGISLATIVE REFORM PRIORITIES**

### **Early Intervention Program – Commercial Insurance**

In 2008, two bills recommended insurance reform:

- A4399: closes loopholes that allow commercial insurers to circumvent requirements to reimburse counties for the cost of EIP services provided to beneficiaries.
- A06814: establishes state pool from which municipalities would be allocated funds to pay for EIP costs.

In 2005, a total of \$97.6 million was billed statewide; however, rates of reimbursement from insurers remained low, approximately 10% to 11%.

Westchester County increased its rate of reimbursement on billable claims from 8% of approximately \$877,000 in 2002 to 15% of approximately \$1.5 million in 2007.

In 2007, approximately 75% of EI children in Westchester were privately insured of which 37% of their covered services were billable to the insurance companies.

## **LEGISLATIVE REFORM PRIORITIES**

### **4410 Preschool Program**

Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2007 created a Temporary Task Force on Preschool Special Education consisting of 15 members representing school districts, providers, counties and State agencies. Westchester County was one of the three municipal seats on this Task Force. The Task Force's November 15, 2007 Report included recommendations to cap county fiscal liability and phase out county administrative involvement in the program.

Counties continue to advocate to transition out of the Preschool Program that is estimated to cost the state \$1.115 billion and counties over \$452 million in FY 07/08.