

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Legislators deliver 1628 “I AM New Day” pledges to Governor on behalf of Day Kimball Healthcare to send message about State Budget**

PUTNAM, CONN. – Senator Mae Flexer and Representatives Daniel Rovero and Mike Alberts attended the “I AM New Day” Pledge Event at Day Kimball Hospital, a service division of Day Kimball Healthcare, to each accept 1628 paper pledges signed by residents and employees from the Northeast Connecticut. The pledges appeal to the State of Connecticut government officials “to be part of the solution to rewrite a thoughtful, responsible Fiscal 2016-17 Connecticut State Budget.” The legislators left after the event to deliver two three-inch bound pledge books to Governor Dannel Malloy at the State Capitol on behalf of the constituents they serve as elected officials.

Chairman of the Board Joseph Adiletta opened the gathering stating that Northeast Connecticut is at risk because of the governor’s proposed budget, which includes \$800 million in additional cuts above the half billion dollars already cut to hospitals across the state in the previous budget cycle. For Day Kimball Hospital the proposed reimbursement cuts and increases in taxes total \$12 million over the two-year period.

Adiletta went on to say, “Almost immediately after the budget was presented, our legislators went to work rewriting the budget and our community began its effort to share why we are concerned that the overarching effects of some of the decisions suggested are not for the better, long term good.”

Day Kimball stated in the “I AM New Day” Pledge document that the burdens the proposed budget places on the organization could leave the community with only an emergency department and minimum number of hospital beds; physicians leaving the community; and greatly reduced access to primary care, obstetrics and gynecology. It also warned of a declining value of housing, closing of small businesses and a crumbling of the school system should jobs be lost because of reduced funding and increased taxes.

The governor’s proposed budget is currently being revised by the General Assembly. Recommended versions and components of the budget have been released by the Republicans, the Appropriations Committee, and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. The delegation is currently in session negotiating the final numbers to be presented to the Governor’s office for approval.

Adiletta stated, “The hard work of our legislators must not be reversed, and, in fact, must be continued during this last phase of the budget process.” He added, “That is why we are here today, to amplify the voice of our community so our message and our appeal is clearly heard in Hartford. Our legislators are here today to help us do that – as members of our community and as our elected representatives.”

The bipartisan group of speakers shared the belief that Governor Dannel's proposed budget could not remain as presented, but were cautious about expectations of there being no financial implications for Day Kimball in its final form.

"We are doing our best to deliver the message. We have worked hard on both the Democratic and the Republican proposals, if I can speak to the Republican proposal as well. We all recognize the importance of a small community hospital like this and we have worked to restore funding to make sure a place like Day Kimball stays active and alive in Northeast Connecticut," said Democratic Senator Flexer.

Day Kimball is the largest employer in the region with 1,400 employees of which 82 percent live in Northeast Connecticut and provides \$230 million annual economic impact through the purchase of goods and services and employment of people who spend their paychecks in the region.

Flexer went on to commend Day Kimball's administration for demonstrating the reasons why Day Kimball Hospital is valuable to the community "not just in terms to our health care but to our economy." She added, that Day Kimball has done a "good job trying to reign in the costs and made some tough decisions" and "they've tried to improve the quality of care despite the increasing limited number of resources."

"We'll be proud to bring this message to Hartford today, and I think we're going to have strong support among our colleagues to maintain the critical funding from the State to protect a place like Day Kimball," Flexer said.

Republican Representative Alberts echoed Flexer's statements saying, "We all recognize the importance of the hospital...I can look out in the audience and see a physician who treated me personally and has seen my son, and this organization is really part of what has made this community what we are."

Referencing a quote from a Connecticut Business & Industry Association newsletter, Alberts noted the bipartisan challenge is to draft a balanced budget that erases projected deficits in the next fiscal period, comes in under the spending cap, and avoids tax increases. He cautioned that this is not going to change in the future, stating, "It is going to remain tough for many years to come...keep up your strategic planning, as the State support is not going to continue because there are not the State resources available."

In the past year, Day Kimball has cut expenses by \$6 million, reduced its workforce by 100 full-time equivalent employees, gave a 12 percent pay cut to senior management and increased the burden of health care insurance costs onto employees.

"It's an honor to be here today...everybody realizes Day Kimball Hospital is needed here for health reasons, number one, and for the (1,400) jobs it brings to the area," remarked Democratic Representative Rovero. He noted some people may "play that down," but it plays an important role in the economic strength of the region. Rovero cautioned the audience to not be overly optimistic about the final budget despite the efforts of the legislators thus far in the process.

"Everyone knows the value of Day Kimball Hospital...it's why we got millions and millions of emails and letters. Like Mae said, we had so many emails that we couldn't bring our computers up," said Rovero. He added, "Don't give up. Keep on fighting. We're there working for you the best that we can, I guarantee you."

Day Kimball's pledge campaign included both paper and online options to express concern for the budget process, and ask government officials to provide special consideration for hospitals, in particular Day Kimball. To date, more than 2,500 people submitted pledges to local legislators, and the Lt.

Governor's and Governor's offices. The electronic pledges, distributed through the Connecticut Hospital Association's Voter Voice tool, resulted in 2,535 messages. The paper pledges were copied, bound and addressed into two-book sets which Flexer, Alberts and Rovero delivered to both the Republican and Democratic Senate and House of Representatives, plus Governor Dannel Malloy.

President and CEO Bob Smanik closed the program saying, "I want to thank everyone in this room, in particular the legislators here today... Today shows how we pull together, we are interdependent and together we will stand strong and continue into the future. Thank you to our HealthQuest partners, to our employees. You have been through a lot; this is a different environment today than even a few years ago, and yet you continue to allow us to achieve accolades for the quality care we provide." He then called up the legislators for the ceremonial presentation of the pledge books.

Attendees at the event included Day Kimball Board of Directors, employees, and Patient Advisory Council members, and HealthQuest Northeast partners including Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, Northeast District Department of Health, Generations, TEEG, Eastern Connecticut Health Insurance Program, WINY Radio, and Town of Putnam.

Day Kimball Healthcare is a non-profit, integrated medical services provider comprised of Day Kimball Hospital, healthcare centers in Danielson, Dayville, Plainfield and Putnam, Day Kimball HomeCare, Hospice & Palliative Care of Northeastern CT, Day Kimball HomeMakers, and Day Kimball Medical Group. Its service area includes Northeast Connecticut as well as nearby Massachusetts and Rhode Island communities. Day Kimball Healthcare's comprehensive network offers more than 1,400 employees including nearly 300 associated, highly-skilled physicians, surgeons and specialists. Its website is [daykimball.org](http://daykimball.org).

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