



## ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

### REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

May 2, 2025

Kevin Hardwick  
Erie County Comptroller  
95 Franklin Street  
Buffalo, NY 14202

RE: Erie County PPE Stockpile Management

Comptroller Hardwick,

As Erie County Legislators, we are writing to express our concerns about the county's stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE) and durable medical equipment (DME) purchased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A recent audit<sup>1</sup> released by New York State Comptroller DiNapoli on April 11<sup>th</sup> has highlighted significant issues with the state's management of similar supplies that we believe warrant immediate attention at the county level.

The state audit revealed very troubling findings about the management of taxpayer resources. We feel an obligation to ensure those findings don't have parallels in Erie County.

- The state spent \$452.8 million on nearly 250,000 items of durable medical equipment that now largely sits unused in warehouses across New York, costing taxpayers additional money in storage expenses.
- Maintenance requirements for medical equipment have been neglected, with 90% of items requiring scheduled preventive maintenance.
- Despite medical facilities expressing interest in tens of thousands of pieces of equipment, very few items were distributed from the state stockpile.
- The audit identified insufficient financial controls during emergency procurement, particularly with credit card purchases, resulting in difficulties accounting for all purchased items.

While Erie County conducted a PPE inventory in 2022 and provided a warehouse tour for legislators at that time, there has not been a recent comprehensive audit or inventory of our supplies made public. Given that we continue to have storage costs for these items and that their usefulness may diminish over time, we believe we need to assess the situation.

We respectfully request that your office conduct a comprehensive audit of Erie County's PPE and DME stockpile to address the following questions:

- What is the current inventory and estimated value of PPE and DME in county storage? How much has been disposed of so far due to expiration?
- What are the ongoing storage costs, and are there more cost-effective alternatives?
- What is the shelf life of the stored items, and do we have a plan to use or distribute items before they expire?

We also respectfully request comprehensive documentation detailing what materials were distributed and to whom, as well as a copy of the lease agreement in its entirety for review.

The goal of this audit would be to ensure taxpayer funds are being used efficiently while maintaining emergency preparedness for the future. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



John J. Mills  
Minority Leader



Christopher D. Greene  
Legislator, District 6



Frank J. Todaro  
Legislator, District 8



Lindsay R. Lorigo  
Legislator, District 10