

## NEWS

# RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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## **Rensselaer County Legislature Urges State to Adjust Income Guidelines for Seniors Enrolled in the EPIC Program**

**Troy**—The Rensselaer County Legislature unanimously approved a resolution sponsored by Legislator Flora Fasoldt urging that the income guidelines used to determine eligibility and benefit levels for participants in (EPIC) Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage be adjusted for inflation. EPIC is a New York State program that helps seniors pay for their prescription drugs. More than a quarter million EPIC enrollees are saving an average of 90 percent of the cost of their medicines.

Fasoldt, a member of the Health and Social Service Committees noted, “Many of our seniors face high costs for pharmaceuticals and would be unable to afford medication which is essential to their health if not for the EPIC program. However, State legislation is necessary to increase the income level for eligible participants so we can give seniors access to affordable prescription drug coverage.”

Currently, there is legislation in the New York State Assembly - Bill A03916 which would amend the elder law to increase income limits for participants in the program to \$42,000 for singles and \$65,000 for married couples. On January 29, 2009 the bill was referred to Aging for review.

The Democratic Minority Office received calls from constituents who are concerned because income guidelines are out of date. Louis Verenini, a Wynantskill resident remarked, “I’ve done a lot of research and found that the income range has not been changed since 2001. Every time seniors receive a cost of living increase, it puts them in a higher income bracket so they pay more for the same service.”

Consequently, as a result of inflation, some seniors are receiving reduced benefits and many seniors are not qualifying. “The economic downturn has been particularly hard on seniors living on fixed incomes,” stated Troy Legislator Peter Grimm, “I was pleased that the Rensselaer County Legislature collectively supported this resolution and hope the State Legislature acts accordingly.”