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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN TAKES STEPS TO EXPLORE THE  
CONSOLIDATION OF THE COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND  
THE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

**Dr. La Mar Hasbrouck being tapped to lead both departments**

Kingston, NY – In an effort to streamline government and further promote health and wellness, County Executive Mike Hein announced today his intention to explore the consolidation of the county’s Mental Health Department with the Ulster County Health Department.

Ulster County Commissioner of Mental Health, Edward Brown, Ph. D, announced last week that he will retire effective the end of March.

In light of Commissioner Brown’s retirement, County Executive Mike Hein announced today that he will appoint the current Director of Ulster County’s Department of Health, Dr. La Mar Hasbrouck, to serve in a dual role and assume the duties of Commissioner of the Ulster County Mental Health Department as well. The Executives appointment provides for a unique opportunity to evaluate the coordination of multiple health service delivery systems.

As New York State government attempts to address its \$10 billion budget gap, counties throughout the state are facing the potential for significant reductions in state aid and Medicaid reimbursements. “State and county governments are in a period of great transition and must continue to proactively identify efficiencies. In addition to improving service coordination, this action is expected to provide Ulster County taxpayers with estimated annualized savings of over \$57,000 immediately. We look forward to working with the departments’ boards, the Health and Human Services Committee, the entire Legislature and all stakeholders to ensure that the highest quality service continues to be delivered” said County Executive Mike Hein.

County Executive Hein added, “Our *Healthy Ulster* initiative views mental wellness as a key component of a healthy community. I have the utmost confidence in Dr. Hasbrouck and his ability to provide leadership for these important departments and analyze this potential merger all while acknowledging our overriding need to do more with less.”

“I am eager for this opportunity and I embrace the challenge of bringing all of Ulster County’s health functions under one umbrella,” said Dr. Hasbrouck. “I will work with the department staff and everyone involved as we continue to strive toward the ultimate goal of making Ulster County the healthiest county in all of New York State”

Theresa Pabon, Chair of the Mental Health Community Services Board, registered her support, noting that, “Given the challenges facing the health care industry, and especially the community mental health field, it is appropriate for us to explore this potential integration. I’m excited about the opportunity to raise the status of mental illness to the level of all other public health issues.”

“We look forward to working with the County Executive in exploring this important departmental merger,” said Ulster County Legislator, Walter Frey, and Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee. “This demonstrates our commitment to streamlining and ensuring accountability to the taxpayers of Ulster County.”