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M. DAVID REILLY, JR.
COMMISSIONER

PATRICK ALDERSON
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

May 21, 2024

Honorable Joanne Cunningham, Chairwoman
Albany County Legislature
112 State Street, Room 710
Albany, New York 12207

Dear Chairwoman Cunningham,

As part of the State FY2023 budget, New York State created a Health Care and Mental Hygiene Worker Bonus (HWB) Program, allocating \$1.2 billion in funding for the payment of bonuses for certain frontline healthcare workers. The NYS HWB Program allows for bonus payments to "recruit, retain, and reward health care and mental hygiene workers" who meet specific eligibility requirements as set forth in Part ZZ of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022. Bonus amounts are commensurate with the number of hours worked by eligible workers covered by the HWB Program during designated vesting periods, up to a total of \$3,000 per covered worker.

Some County Departments are "eligible employers" due to the nature of their work. County Departments determine whether their operations met the qualifying employer criteria and identify eligible employees based on titles prescribed by NYS. Departments then submit claims on behalf of eligible employees to NYS by the due date for the vesting period – for the fifth vesting period, claims were due 5/1/2024. For this vesting period, County Departments submitted 64 claims on behalf of employees for a total of \$84,000 in bonus payments. Additionally, the County is anticipating receiving reimbursement for FICA contributions at 7.65%, equivalent to \$6,433. In total, Albany County departments are anticipating receiving \$90,433 from NYS for the fifth vesting period of the HWB program. Currently NYS is reviewing the claims submitted on behalf of County employees and will remit payment to the eligible County Departments. Once the County has received payment from NYS, we must pay bonuses to employees no later than 30 days afterwards.

This request to amend the 2024 County Budget adds the necessary personnel non-individual and fringe appropriations and revenue lines to each respective department's budget in anticipation of prompt payment of the NYS HWB bonus for vesting period 5 (October 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024) to eligible employees. Departments who weren't able to file on behalf of eligible employees for previous vesting periods, were able to submit those claims during this cycle, which are reflected in this request for legislative action.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

M. David Reilly
Commissioner, Management & Budget

cc: Hon. Dennis A. Feeney, Majority Leader
Hon. Frank A. Mauriello, Minority Leader
Rebekah Kennedy, Majority Counsel
Arnis Zilgme, Minority Counsel