

Hospitals will be hardest hit by new budget

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER— Catholic hospitals and nursing homes will be hard hit by a new tax imposed as part of deficit-reduction package approved by the New York state Legislature Dec. 14, hospital officials said.

As a result, officials noted, they may be forced to cut programs to avoid budget deficits of their own.

The state Legislature also cut funding of social-service programs as it struggled to reduce an estimated \$1 billion deficit in the state's \$50 billion budget.

Action Center for the Disabled, a program of the Catholic Family Center, alone will experience a funding cut equal to one-third of its budget, CFC officials said. As a result, the agency will be forced to make substantial staffing cuts effective Jan. 17, 1991.

The state Legislature approved a tax on hospitals that will increase in proportion to the number of Medicaid patients a hospital serves. The tax could reach as much as

675 percent of the institution's revenues. "Those hospitals who serve a higher percentage of Medicaid patients will be assessed at a higher rate," said Michael Alvaro, an official of the Hospital Association of New York State.

Thus, Alvaro acknowledged, hospitals that serve the poor will be unfairly affected by the plan.

Steve Gary, chief financial officer for St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, noted that his institution will be among those hurt by the cut.

"St. Mary's would pay a disproportionate amount of tax for serving the people we have a mission to serve," he said.

Gary said St. Mary's will have to look carefully at cutting expenses to avoid a reduction in services to the population it serves. "St. Mary's needs to fund those services," he said. "There's a group of people who need access to good, quality health care."

According to Dave Sullivan, director of the community relations office at St.

Joseph's Hospital, Elmira, hospital officials are still waiting to see whether the tax is on gross or net income. In either case, he said, the tax approved is better than the 1-percent tax rate that the legislature had been discussing.

If that 1-percent rate had gone into effect, the hospital would have been taxed \$400,000-\$450,000, Sullivan said, adding that he anticipates St. Joseph's tax liability will be somewhat less than that amount because of the rate reduction.

"It looks like from that perspective, that it will be better for us," he said.

Sullivan said the hospital had not yet decided how to reduce its expenses, but acknowledged that programs for Medicaid patients and free screening services for the community will be among those reviewed.

Carolyn Portanova, executive director of the Catholic Family Center, said that a number of her agency's programs will be directly or indirectly damaged by the cuts.

"It's going to affect us," Portanova said. "The poor people, in particular, are

going to be hurt by the cutbacks."

Portanova noted, for example, that while the center's aging services department would not suffer any direct cuts, it would be adversely affected by cuts to other agencies.

"There are going to be cuts to programs and services that other agencies offer that augment our services," Portanova explained. "The (other agencies' services) won't be there. The demand on our services will be so much greater."

The center's disabled services department has already been notified that a \$30,000 contract — representing one-third of the department's budget — has been cancelled.

The contract had been approved by the legislature for the current fiscal year — which began April 1, 1990 — but had not been signed by the Oct. 30 deadline imposed by Gov. Mario Cuomo.

Believing that the contract would be signed, the department had been funding

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Parish-run phase of 1990 TGA ends with pledges nearing goal

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — With the parish-run phase of the Thanks Giving Appeal now completed, figures for the 1990 TGA are running slightly ahead of those from a comparable point in the 1989 campaign, diocesan officials reported.

The apparent gain on 1989 figures comes in spite of a reduced number of reported donors to the TGA thus far this year and of changes in the parish-quota system.

As of Dec. 13, 1990, approximately 56,000 donors had pledged \$3.95 million to the 1990 appeal, the chief source of income for the Rochester diocese. The diocesan goal for the 1990 appeal is \$4,100,599, which represents 62 percent of the 1990-91 diocesan budget of \$6,597,705.

As of Dec. 19, 1989, 58,000 donors had pledged \$3.9 toward the 1989 TGA target of \$4,060,000.

"In a sense, we're about five, six days ahead of where we were last year," said Mark Seeberg, director of the diocesan development office. "We've got the same amount of money from fewer (contributors). It works out to three to four dollars higher on average than last year."

According to results compiled Dec. 5, 1990, 57 parishes had already received pledges exceeding 100 percent of their goal. An additional 72 parishes had collected pledges totalling 85 percent of their quotas.

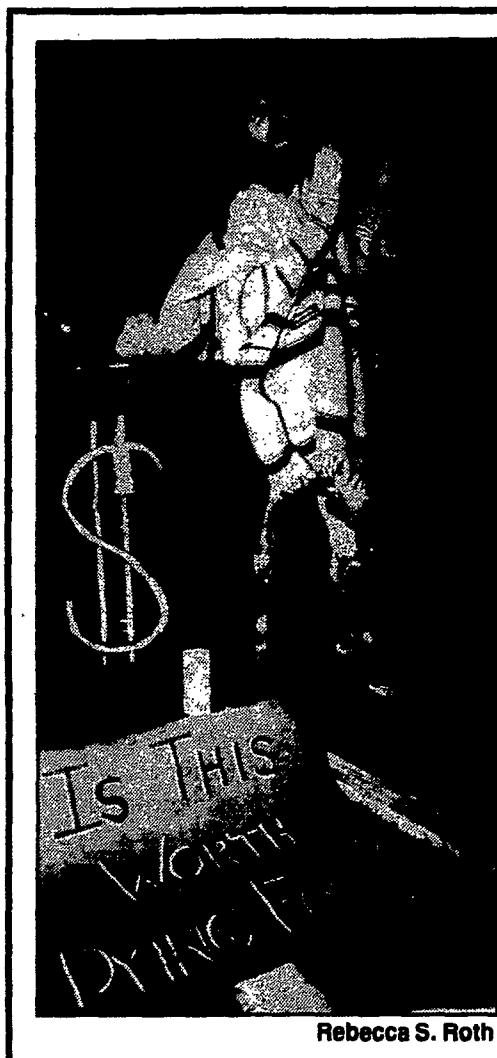
In the appeals of previous years, parishes that failed to reach their full quotas were required to make up the differences with monies from their operating budgets. For the 1990 appeal, however, parishes must make up shortfalls only if pledges fall below 85 percent of the overall parish quota.

"I don't believe that reducing the quota has reduced the pledge commitments," Seeberg commented. "In general terms, parishes are as generous as they always were, and in some cases, even more ge-

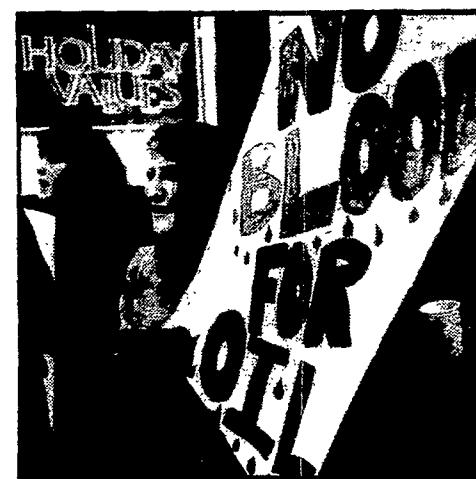
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Don't be fooled!

In a change from the way we've done things in the past, we will publish this year's annual Holiday Keepsake Edition the issue right after Christmas — Dec. 27. Look for the special theme issue next week. Happy Holidays!



Rebecca S. Roth



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

March for peace in gulf draws 600

Above, Thandi Emdon of Brighton was among 600 people who marched from Rochester's Manhattan Square Park to Christ Episcopal Church Dec. 16 in support of a peaceful resolution to the Persian Gulf crisis. At left, Cliff Smith chants peace slogans during the demonstration, which was organized by the Ad Hoc Committee to Stop the Gulf War.

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