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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement from Buffalo Niagara Partnership President/CEO Andrew J. Rudnick on Gov. David Paterson's Proposed 2010-11 New York State Budget:

“In our initial assessment of the governor’s 2010-11 budget proposal we are heartened by his attempt to control overall spending. However, given the state’s current and growing budget deficit, we’d much prefer to see the price tag for running New York State government go down. Anything but a reduction is too much.

And we are more than a little troubled with the governor’s over-reliance on new revenues. Given the current economic climate, the slate of new taxes and fees the governor wants – totaling some \$1.4 billion - is simply not acceptable.

While the governor’s goals of improving the health of state residents and thereby cutting public healthcare expenses is an admirable one, his approach of levying new taxes on cigarettes and soda pop to achieve a healthier New York just doesn’t fly.

And if his goal truly is to improve the state’s health status, where’s the wisdom behind hitting hospitals, nursing homes and home care providers with an extra \$242 million in fees? Just for once we’d like to see state accept some pain rather than inflicting it on everyone else.

Gov. Paterson’s proposal also fails to put into place longer term spending reductions that are absolutely necessary given the forecast of a much more serious deficit in 2011.

We are, however, extremely pleased to see inclusion of the UB 20/20 reforms that are critical to the growth and economic well-being of the University at Buffalo and other SUNY and CUNY institutions. We urge state legislators to also support giving these educational institutions much-needed flexibility in setting tuitions and forging strategic partnerships. Passage of these reforms is absolutely critical.