



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

KEN BLANKENBUSH
Assemblyman 122nd District

May 13, 2011

Dr. Nirav R. Shah, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Commissioner,

I write to you in regard to regulations on municipal summer recreational programs. I was pleased that the Department of Health (DOH) decided a few weeks ago to reexamine its list of potential “risky” activities, and at the time of this decision, it was my understanding that municipal summer programs would not be subject to the same regulations as commercial day camps.

However, it has recently been brought to my attention that several municipal summer programs in my district are again being told that they will be subject to the same regulations as commercial day camps, including DOH approval of recreation programs coordinators and the hiring of 4 to 5 additional staff.

Summer recreation programs operate on limited budgets, but provide plenty of opportunities for children to stay active and socialize with their peers throughout the summer break in a safe, supervised environment. Similar commercial programs are extremely limited here in the North Country, given the rural nature of our region.

At a time when Governor Cuomo has pledged to reduce burdensome mandates on local governments, these regulations are simply another unfunded mandate from Albany—and could spell the end for many summer youth programs that parents and children rely on.

At this time, I am discussing with my colleagues in the Senate the possibility of introducing legislation to rectify this issue. However, in the meantime, I welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss a way we can address this problem in a more timely and apparent manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Blankenbush". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K" and "B".

Ken Blankenbush
Member of Assembly
122nd Assembly District

KB/jcr