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## **Stimulus windfall beefs up budget**

### **Staff Reports** **Tonawanda News**

— — Erie County is expected to receive an infusion of federal stimulus money this year, County Comptroller Mark Poloncarz said Monday.

Following a reconciliation made by the state Health Department, the county should receive \$11.7 million more than budgeted in Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) revenue this budget year.

In its adopted budget, the county planned on receiving \$33.1 million in FMAP revenue. The state reconciliation adds \$4.5 million in unexpected revenue, and is in addition to \$7.2 million in unbudgeted FMAP revenue first noted in August.

Based on state data, the comptroller's office now forecasts 2010 FMAP assistance at \$44.7 million. Last year the county received \$41 million. The federal assistance was the main reason the county had a surplus totaling nearly \$44 million for 2009.

"Our office was anticipating an increase in FMAP assistance above the 2010 budgeted amount by at least \$7.2 million, but now we know Erie County will be receiving an additional windfall payment of almost \$4.5 million," Poloncarz wrote in a statement. "As a result of these windfall FMAP payments, the county will in all likelihood finish Fiscal Year 2010 with another surplus."

It will be the county's sixth straight year with a surplus under Poloncarz's watch.

The Federal Medical Assistance Percentage payments were made to help local governments avoid serious cuts and job losses during a difficult economic period.

Poloncarz now is calling on the county Legislature to take the windfall into consideration during its deliberations on next year's budget.

"Otherwise we are defeating the purpose of the stimulus program and putting necessary programs on the chopping block needlessly," Poloncarz said.

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