



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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An Educational Panel: What Are Our Options Post-St. Vincent's?

THOMAS K. DUANE May 26, 2010

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In the wake of the devastating closure of St. Vincent's Hospital, on May 21st I hosted an educational panel on what it would take to bring a full-service hospital back to Manhattan's Lower West Side, as well as how we can preserve and expand health care in our communities now. I am grateful to Community Boards 1, 2, 3 and 4, along with New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, US Representative Jerrold Nadler, New York State Senator Daniel Squadron, New York State Assembly Members Deborah Glick and Richard Gottfried and New York City Council Member

Margaret Chin for co-sponsoring this event. If political will and community support were all that were necessary to preserve a hospital on the Lower West Side, we would never have lost St. Vincent's, let alone be faced with fighting for a replacement. Unfortunately, that is not the case, but with a firm handle on the challenges we face, we can develop sound strategies to overcome them.

Approximately 200 lower Manhattan residents and St. Vincent's stakeholders attended the event, at which high-level hospital, health care and health policy experts addressed such questions as what the factors that led to St. Vincent's closure imply for a new hospital; financing for a new hospital; physical plant options; staffing considerations; the need for residency training programs; the role of primary care in meeting community health care needs; how we can help preserve St. Vincent's outpatient medical services and the importance of ensuring access to – and a single standard of – care for all.

Video footage of the forum is now available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVC5sVNhSBo and a transcript is forthcoming. I look forward to working with lower Manhattan's Community Boards, my colleagues in government, advocacy organizations, concerned residents and other stakeholders to develop and implement an action plan, based upon what we learned at the forum, to ensure that we preserve and expand our communities' health care services now and ultimately bring a full-service hospital and emergency room back to Manhattan's Lower West Side.