



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Eric Adams

Press Release---Saving SUNY Downstate...What's Next?

Eric Adams

June 20, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Karen Ford (518) 455-2431

PRESS RELEASE- "SAVING SUNY DOWNSTATE, WHAT'S NEXT?"

NYS Senators Eric Adams, Velmanette Montgomery, Kevin Parker, John Sampson, and Daniel Squadron respond to SUNY Downstate Medical Center's assertion of economic hardship and its request to support the hospital's financial restructuring.

Meetings between members of the New York State Senate Brooklyn Delegation and SUNY Board of Trustees Chairman Carl McCall and SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher have illuminated the need for SUNY Downstate to disclose financial records to the Medical Center's workforce and resident consumers.

Following a well-attended June 15 Town Hall meeting concerning SUNY Downstate Medical Center, Senator Eric Adams and fellow members of the New York State Senate Brooklyn Delegation have called on State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli to conduct a full audit of the Center and its affiliates.

Senator Adams (D-20) stated that the members of the Senate Brooklyn Delegation are "committed to maintaining the flow of information to those individuals who may be affected by SUNY's proposed actions and to open the doors for negotiations to deter the potentially negative impact on our community."

Senate Democratic Conference Leader John Sampson (D-19) stated that "Downstate Medical Center is crucial to the health and well being of people throughout Brooklyn. The financial troubles facing this institution are deeply disturbing and cause for great concern. We must take concrete steps to ensure that all problems are properly identified and addressed. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate and with Comptroller DiNapoli to ensure that Downstate continues to provide critical medical service to the people of New York City."

Senator Kevin Parker (D-21) said that this action was taken because "the need for transparency and clarity before we move into a restructuring plan for downstate is paramount. We need an audit to ensure that we are making the best decisions possible prior to moving forward."

Senator Adams added, "It's important for us to identify the fiscal conditions that threaten the viability of the Center. This will enable us to focus on sustainable solutions to ensure the delivery of health care services to Central Brooklyn residents and the continuation of sound medical training while maintaining the economic integrity of our community."

Since 1860, the Borough of Brooklyn has been home to Downstate Medical Center, which has provided health services to millions and an education to thousands of medical practitioners and physicians. As the fourth largest employer in the Borough, Downstate employs 8,000 individuals, 60% of whom reside in Brooklyn as homeowners, renters, and consumers of goods provided by a legion of small business owners. Downstate hosts one of the largest minority student populations and graduates one of the largest groups of physicians of color. Moreover, 80% of its medical school graduates remain in New York City, primarily in Brooklyn.

Senator Velmanette Montgomery (D-18) underlined the significance of the hospital in her statement: "SUNY Downstate Medical Center is the only academic medical center for health education, research and patient care serving Brooklyn's 2.5 million residents. This flagship teaching hospital produces highly-skilled health professionals, the majority of whom remain in the Borough to provide critical health care services. Downstate must be preserved."

Senator Daniel Squadron (D-25), whose district includes SUNY Downstate University Hospital of Brooklyn at Long Island College Hospital, said, "Downstate-LICH is critical to our Brooklyn community, which is already dramatically underserved when it comes to health care. Over the past few years, we fought hard to keep LICH open, and to ensure that Downstate's vital services are kept accessible to residents across the borough. Now health care access for our neighborhoods and the entire borough, as well as thousands of jobs, hang in the balance. Our community needs a full accounting of Downstate's finances and how they got to this point, and a plan to protect these critical services and jobs for the long-term."

###