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December 15, 2014

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Office of the Mayor
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

I am writing to you concerning the tragic fire in Brooklyn, NY on November 19, 2014 near the corner of Farragut Rd. and Flatbush Ave. The fire left one resident dead, and sixteen injured victims, many of whom were severely burned and unable to receive immediate treatment because Brooklyn has no burn treatment unit. I am therefore respectfully requesting that you take immediate action on the creation of a burn unit in Brooklyn, and am proposing that some of the funds from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) waiver funding be used towards its creation.

Currently, New York City burn victims have only three options: Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital (Manhattan), Jacoby Hospital (the Bronx), and Staten Island University Hospital North. None of those institutions are located in Brooklyn. Given the immediate danger for loss of life and limb in the aftermath of a fire, and the tremendous difference that immediate application of appropriate care can make, it is unconscionable that Brooklyn's residents are left without proper access to the high quality life saving medical care that they deserve.

Brooklyn is the seventh largest county in the United States, and Brooklyn is as populous as America's fourth largest city. The borough has approximately 2.5 million people and represents thirty (30) percent of the population of New York City. Brooklyn is also home to seven hospitals and seven medical centers, but no burn unit. Consequently, after a fire, victims with obvious burn damage are transported to other boroughs to receive care. Fire victims whose burns are not evident are treated initially at local hospitals including Brookdale, Kings County and New York Community Hospital, and only then transported to other boroughs to receive care for their burns. I have no doubt you agree with me that these survivors should not be subjected to time delays in proper medical treatment, nor should their loved ones be subjected to additional stress because of the need to travel for visitation during the burn victims' recovery.

Just this week, there was a fire in East New York injuring seven people, and another fire in Coney Island, leaving one dead and five injured. The quality of care of those fire victims would have been improved by easy and rapid access to a burn unit in Brooklyn. Additionally, the necessity of the types of medical treatment available in a burn unit is not only limited to burns received in fires, but it is also commonly used in accidents that occur with individuals injured as pedestrians or bicycle, scooter, and motor cycle riders who often skid across concrete or asphalt surfaces after being hit, dragged, or falling. For example, two weeks ago a Brooklyn high school

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student was caught under a school safety vehicle and dragged for several feet. Afterward, he was unable to receive immediate treatment in the Brooklyn community. These types of incidents, among others, and the inability to provide appropriate care immediately in Brooklyn, are the reason why we must remedy Brooklyn's lack of a burn unit and safeguard the health of our Brooklyn constituencies.

In April 2014, the Federal Government approved an eight (8) billion dollar Sec. 1115 Medicaid Waiver for the State of New York. More than \$1 billion of that money is to be used for the rehabilitation of hospitals and medical facilities, providing much needed capital improvements, and for providing financial assistance for those facilities struggling to maintain their operational budgets. I am proposing that a portion of the CMS 1115 Waiver be allocated to establish a burn unit in one or more of the fourteen hospital and medical facilities in Brooklyn. This is one way to establish a burn unit, but I believe we must investigate all resources available to solve the problem of inadequate health care facilities for burn victims.

I believe we cannot delay on providing this life-saving and incredibly important palliative care facility. Fires and accidents causing loss of life and severe injury occur relatively often due to the large numbers of wood-frame houses in Brooklyn that are in close proximity to each other. Additionally, Brooklyn's population is growing at an exponential rate, and the long term effect of not having a burn unit in at least one of the fourteen hospitals and medical centers risks the health, safety and welfare of our constituents, and limits our communities' growth and overall health. Finally, as you know from our efforts fighting to maintain the quality and availability of Brooklyn's health care system and services, it is unconscionable for New York's most populous borough to lack a burn unit. Brooklyn's residents deserve quicker access to a burn unit than having to travel to Staten Island, Manhattan or the Bronx, or further.

Therefore, I am respectfully requesting that your office take the prudent and swift action to work with New York's hospitals, city, state and federal officials and agencies to establish, through the use of the CMS waiver monies, and such other city and state funds would be necessary, a burn unit in the borough of Brooklyn. As you may have heard, I am working with other elected officials in the borough of Brooklyn to help bring about the creation of a new burn center. We must not fail in creating this solution, since the severity of the issue demands immediate attention to save lives and prevent unnecessary injury.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at (718) 629-6401.

Yours in Partnership,



KEVIN PARKER

cc: Emma Wolfe, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Mayor's Office
Ramanathan Raju, President and CEO NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation
Howard A. Zucker, Commissioner New York State Department of Health