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January 27, 2014

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

I write to you today concerning the state of crisis that Brooklyn's hospitals are facing, and their desperate need for a capital infusion via the Medicaid waiver process. Brooklyn is New York's most populous county; if it were a city, it would be larger than Washington, D.C., Boston and Philadelphia combined. Nonetheless, three private hospitals are teetering on the edge of insolvency, Brooklyn's only medical school (SUNY-Downstate Medical Center) is hemorrhaging money, and New York's application for \$10 billion in waiver money from the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) has not been granted. I am respectfully requesting you therefore to use your best efforts to make sure that New York receives its waiver money without undue delay.

Let me take a few moments to describe the magnitude of Brooklyn's health care crisis, using SUNY-Downstate Medical Center (Downstate) as an example. SUNY Downstate is Brooklyn's fourth-largest employer. The combined hospital and medical school generates \$1.3 billion annually for the state's economy, and the majority of the hospital's 8,000 workers live in Brooklyn. Countless local jobs, mortgages and small businesses rely upon the middle-class employment SUNY Downstate provides. In every way that matters, the wealth and economic health of Brooklyn and its small businesses and entrepreneurs depends upon SUNY Downstate.

SUNY Downstate is also one of the nation's leading urban medical centers. It contains a College of Medicine, College of Health Related Professions, College of Nursing, School of Graduate Studies, School of Public Health, and University Hospital of Brooklyn – Brooklyn's "hospital of last resort" for low-income patients. The medical school trains the most diverse of medical professionals of any hospital in the United States, and produces more doctors who live and work in New York City than any other medical school. More than 80 percent of Downstate medical school graduates stay to practice in New York State! SUNY Downstate is also in the top 96% of schools graduating African-American medical professionals, and in the top 93% of schools in

numbers of African-American faculty. In every way that matters, SUNY Downstate is unmatched in the way it helps the Brooklyn community now, and partners in our future.

In addition to the fiscal crisis at Downstate (and its LICH campus), Brooklyn's private hospitals have been experiencing extreme fiscal challenges over the past few years. In particular, Interfaith Hospital, Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center and Brookdale Hospital are struggling, and four additional private hospitals have closed in the last ten years (Victory Memorial, St. Mary's, Brooklyn Hospital-Caledonia, and Interfaith Medical-Crown Heights).

In conclusion, Brooklyn's hospitals are in financial crisis. To maintain the hospitals and health care delivery system for the three million New Yorkers that live in the borough, our hospitals need the \$10 billion that Governor Cuomo is seeking through the CMS 1115 waiver process. Therefore, as noted above, I am respectfully requesting you to use your best efforts to ensure that New York will receive the CMS waiver funds without undue delay.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (518) 455-2580.

Yours in Partnership,

  
KEVIN PARKER

cc: Secretary Kathleen Sebelius  
Senator Charles Schumer  
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand  
Congressman Hakeem Jeffries  
Congresswoman Yvette Clarke  
Congressman Jerrold Nadler  
Governor Andrew Cuomo