

Good afternoon,

I would like to testify in person at the 2024 Joint Legislative Budget Hearing. Per the form's instructions, I have summarized my testimony below. I appreciate any time and attention devoted to this concerning matter.

Summary of Testimony

I would like to emphatically express my deep concern and opposition to any plans that may involve the downsizing or diminishment of SUNY Downstate Hospital and University, particularly considering the significant impact on young Black and Brown women in our community. These institutions play a crucial role in our community, providing essential healthcare services and fostering education and research through programs like the HEAT Program.

SUNY Downstate Hospital serves as a lifeline for countless individuals in our community, offering high-quality healthcare services to those in need. Any reduction in its capacity would undoubtedly have detrimental effects on the health and well-being of our residents. Furthermore, the hospital serves as a vital training ground for medical professionals, contributing significantly to the development of a skilled healthcare workforce born out of Brooklyn that includes dedicated individuals committed to improving the health of the borough's residents.

The HEAT Program, as a part of SUNY Downstate Hospital and University, is a shining example of the positive impact these institutions have on our community. Much like its hosting institutions, The HEAT program does so much to support and promote the health of Brooklyn residents. It responds to the healthcare needs of underserved populations, addressing the specific challenges faced by youth from the LGBTQ+ community and those at an elevated risk of HIV contraction and transmission, including young Black and Brown women. By maintaining the full capacity of SUNY Downstate, we ensure the continuation and expansion of programs like HEAT, which are instrumental in addressing health disparities and promoting the well-being of our diverse community.

Downsizing SUNY Downstate would not only compromise the quality of healthcare services but also hinder the advancement of medical research and education. Our community relies on these institutions for comprehensive, accessible, and culturally competent healthcare, particularly essential for young people. Any reduction in their capacity would be a disservice to the people they serve, especially those who are most vulnerable and in need of specialized care.

I urge you to consider the long-term consequences and the profound impact that minimizing SUNY Downstate Hospital and University would have on our community. I respectfully request that you prioritize the preservation and enhancement of these vital institutions, ensuring that they can continue to fulfill their essential roles in healthcare, education, and research, thereby contributing to the overall health and success of our community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust that you will make decisions that prioritize the well-being of our community and the continued success of the HEAT Program, the SUNY Downstate Hospital, and its University.

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