



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

Joint Electeds Letter to DOH re New York Eye and Ear Infirmary

BRIAN KAVANAGH March 3, 2023

| ISSUE: **ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE**

March 3, 2023

James V. McDonald

Acting Commissioner

New York State Department of Health Corning Tower

Empire State Plaza

Albany, NY 12237

Dear Commissioner McDonald:

We write regarding the proposal to merge the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary (NYEEI) and Mount Sinai Beth Israel. On February 9th, the Public Health and Health Planning Council (PHHPC) voted 11-6 in favor of the proposal (222087) and advanced it to your office without a formal recommendation. To our knowledge this is the first time in over a decade there was insufficient support on the PHHPC to formally recommend approval of a Certificate of Need (CON) request. Some members of the PHHPC cited concerns including Mt. Sinai's unclear plans for the facility following the merger, their insufficient community outreach, and the vocal opposition from members of the community and health professionals who work at the facility.

Since 1820 NYEEI has provided indispensable and high-quality eye, ear, nose, and throat care for working people, union families, retirees, immigrants, and other underserved and vulnerable communities in lower Manhattan and the surrounding area. NYEEI serves tens of thousands of patients annually and its location in the heart of our community and the mix of services at a single site make these services more easily accessible to New Yorkers who rely on them—many of whom face physical disabilities with courage and resilience.

On February 1st, local legislators wrote a letter to Mt. Sinai CEO, Ken Davis where we outlined our concerns with the merger request and asked for a pause and a real community conversation. As the matter now rests at your desk, we request a meeting to discuss this matter prior to any decisions on the issue. It is imperative that the community and their elected representatives have a voice in the future of crucial healthcare services.

Sincerely,

Harvey Epstein, State Assemblymember

Brian Kavanagh, State Senator

Brad Hoylman-Sigal, State Senator

Deborah Glick, State Assemblymember

Grace Lee, State Assemblymember

Michael Durso, State Assemblymember

Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President

Carlina Rivera, City Councilmember

Chris Marte, City Councilmember

Crystal Hudson, City Councilmember

Erik Bottcher, City Councilmember

Gale Brewer, City Councilmember

Julie Menin, City Councilmember

Keith Powers, City Councilmember

Linda Lee, City Councilmember

Lynn Schulman, City Councilmember

Pierina Sanchez, City Councilmember