



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Luis R. Sepúlveda

## Public Statement on Maintaining Healthcare Access in the Bronx Amidst Emblem Health Service Suspensions

RUSKING PIMENTEL January 2, 2024

I, New York State Senator Luis Sepúlveda representing the 32nd District in the Bronx, am deeply troubled by the recent actions of Emblem Health in closing three BronxDocs Medical Centers. These closures have occurred just days before Christmas, a time when the spirit of compassion and community should be at its strongest. This decision has left thousands of our community members without critical care services and 90 dedicated staff members unemployed.

The abrupt closure of the facilities at E149th St., Southern Boulevard, and Westchester Avenue is more than just an inconvenience; it is a severe blow to a community that already faces significant health disparities. These centers have been a lifeline for 12,000 patients, many of whom are vulnerable and rely on these locations for life-saving treatments. The decision to suspend services without adequate notice or a viable alternative plan is not just insensitive; it is irresponsible and dangerous.

The patients affected are not just numbers; they are our families, friends, and neighbors who depend on these centers for primary care, pediatrics, specialty care, and diagnostics. The

ability to access timely and specialized medical care is essential, and for many, BronxDocs was the only feasible option. The closure forces patients to seek care in other boroughs, creating substantial barriers for those with limited mobility or financial constraints.

Furthermore, this situation raises serious concerns about Emblem Health's commitment to community health, especially considering the ongoing negotiations for NYC Union Workers health plans. It is imperative that health care providers prioritize the wellbeing and health of the communities they serve. This closure contradicts such commitment and puts corporate interests above human needs.

In light of these developments, I urge Emblem Health to reconsider its decision and find an immediate solution to ensure uninterrupted health care services for the affected patients. This includes providing comprehensive support to the displaced staff members. We must work collaboratively to safeguard the health and welfare of our Bronx community, particularly during times of crisis.

I call upon my colleagues in government, community leaders, and all concerned stakeholders to join me in addressing this critical issue. We must demand accountability and work towards a resolution that prioritizes the health needs of our constituents. The people of the Bronx deserve better, and we must stand united in ensuring they receive the care and support they need.