



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Klein And Doh Save Wsmc From Chopping Block

JEFFREY D. KLEIN March 26, 2008

BRONX-After months of negotiations between the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Westchester Square Medical Center, and New York Presbyterian, Senator Klein is pleased to announce that Westchester Square will remain *open*.

“Our future is once again bright. Families can look forward to the continued personal attention and compassion for which Westchester Square is known. Individuals, in their most mortal moments, will seek comfort in the bonds of community as the nurses and doctors at Westchester Square administer to us, not just as patients, but as people. Today’s announcement proves that when the community stands together, we win,” said Senator Klein.

When the Berger commission first released its report in November, 2006 Senator Klein immediately convened with his colleagues to advocate against the closure of New York’s Westchester Square Medical Center and for a merger with New York Presbyterian Hospital. Joined by Assemblymen Jose Rivera, Naomi Rivera, Carl Heastie, Michael Benedetto, and Ruben Diaz, Jr., Klein urged then Governor Pataki and members of the Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century, to fully consider the public health and economic ramifications of closing the community medical center.

State Health Commissioner **Richard F. Daines, M.D.**, said: "Westchester Square Medical Center will close to comply with the Berger mandate, but I share the community's concern for access to care. New York-Presbyterian Health System's willingness to invest in Westchester Square and reorient its services will give us a three-year period to assess community need."

In January 2007, Senator Klein submitted an avadavat in support of the preliminary injunction granted by Judge Mary Ann Brigatti-Hughs, which would temporarily block the state from shutting down Westchester Square Medical Center (WSMC). A standing member of the Senate Committee on Health since June, 2005, Senator Klein pledged to support the plaintiffs, Mary McKinney and Mechler Hall Community Services, INC., who filed suit against The New York State Department of Health and the state itself to keep Westchester Square open.

Outraged at the prospect of losing this vital community resource, Klein began negotiations and met repeatedly with the Commissioner of the Department of Health, and administrative officials from both Westchester Square and New York Presbyterian in the hopes of brokering a merger. As a result New York Presbyterian plans to merge with Westchester Square Medical Center.

“We are very pleased that the New York State Department of Health has recognized the need to continue offering acute care on the site of Westchester Square, and that the plan submitted by New York-Presbyterian has been accepted and approved. Despite some dark days over the past year, I knew in my heart that this wonderful hospital would continue fulfilling the critical need for quality community healthcare in the Bronx. We’re looking forward to working with New York-Presbyterian to make this plan a reality,” **said Alan Kopman, President of Westchester Square Medical Center.**