



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senator Duane, Local Elected Officials Demand Preservation of Vital Health Services in West Manhattan

THOMAS K. DUANE January 26, 2010

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Speaker Quinn, Seantor Duane, Local Elected Leaders Demand Preservation of Vital Health Services in West Manhattan

Greenwich Village - City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn today called on the state to strike down Continuum Health Partner's proposal that would remove emergency room facilities at St. Vincent's Hospital. The potential consequences of this proposed action are particularly severe given that St. Vincent's acute care center is the only emergency medical space on the Westside of Manhattan from Park Row to 59th Street. State Senator Tom Duane, Assembly Member Deborah Glick and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer joined Speaker Quinn at today's announcement.

The elected officials released a letter to New York State Department of Health Commissioner Richard Daines, calling on him to take action. The State should postpone any final decisions on the plan until it has the opportunity to fully review the specifics of the proposal and the impact it will have on essential healthcare service for the community, making sure there is no threat to vital healthcare access.

Continuum has proposed to take over St. Vincent's Hospital in an effort to financially stabilize its medical centers, but their proposal also includes a plan to remove the emergency room facilities.

Speaker Christine C. Quinn stated, "If the state allows this health group to move forward with its plans to remove emergency care, it would paralyze medical assistance on the west side of Manhattan. Every minute an ambulance has to travel longer to reach a hospital is another minute with a life in jeopardy. We are calling on Commissioner Daines to seriously consider the ramifications of removing emergency medical care and we hope he moves forward with appropriate action."

"I stand with my colleagues and constituents in calling on the State to halt its proposed restructuring of St. Vincent's Hospital in Greenwich Village," said Congressman Jerrold Nadler. "St. Vincent's is an essential resource for New Yorkers, serving as the only Level 1 Trauma Center below 59th Street, and any reduction of its operations would be a disaster. We are urging the State to work with the hospital, community members and elected officials to find the best possible alternative to preserve St. Vincent's excellence in health care."

"We stand as a united front, and call on every agency of the City, State and Federal Government, at the highest levels, to guarantee that St. Vincent's Hospital, the only full service hospital on the lower west side of Manhattan, remains open. St. Vincent's provides critical and essential medical care: immediately accessible emergency treatment, inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care for every age group, HIV treatment and culturally sensitive primary, nursing and long term care - all vital to the residents and working people who live and work in the lower west side. Closing this hospital is unacceptable and I pledge to continue to work with every stakeholder to make sure that it not only remains open, but retains its role as a state-of-the-art hospital and health care provider for the lower west side." said State Senator Thomas K. Duane.

“The loss of a full service hospital on the lower West side of Manhattan dangerously disadvantages the health and safety of tens of thousands of New Yorkers. This is most dramatically true with the elimination of the Level 1 Trauma Care Emergency Room. Some ambulatory care center in no way compensates West side neighborhoods for the loss of a full service hospital, said Assembly Member Deborah Glick.

“After 9/11, St. Vincent’s was the primary admitting hospital for the injured survivors,” said Assembly Health Committee chair Richard N. Gottfried. “Closing the St. Vincent’s Emergency Room and Level 1 Trauma Center would be devastating to the local community, and in the event of a catastrophe, would endanger the City. In the aftermath of September 11, the emergency room was expanded to be able to respond to everyday emergencies as well as large-scale disasters and mass-casualty events. We must do everything possible to protect St. Vincent’s, and especially its ER and Trauma Center.”

“We cannot allow tough financial times to once and for all close the doors to St. Vincent's Hospital,” said Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stinger. “We’ve known for sometime that the hospital has been facing serious financial hardship. But we cannot make this decision solely through the perspective of fiscal solvency. State DOH Commissioner Richard Daines’s connection to Continuum Health Partners raises serious concerns about a potential conflict of interest, and only amplifies the need for real public review and transparency on this proposal before we make any rash decisions.”

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