



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Brooklyn Delegation: State Must Act Now to Save Services, Med Education at Downstate

DANIEL L. SQUADRON August 9, 2012

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Electeds Urge Comprehensive Plan to Save Hospital and Medical School

BROOKLYN – Today, a coalition of Brooklyn elected officials sent a letter to Governor Cuomo urging immediate action to save critical services and medical training at the State University of New York's Downstate Medical Center (Downstate) and its affiliates.

Downstate faces a major operating deficit, and a significant restructuring is necessary for the institution's survival. Downstate's Long Island College Hospital has already laid off 150 employees; over 400 more Downstate employees will receive contract-mandated notice of future layoffs this month, with over a thousand layoffs expected in the next year. This will lead to a massive cut in services and the ability to train medical professionals in Brooklyn.

As a first step, the State Comptroller's office is currently conducting an audit of Downstate at the request of Senators Adams, Montgomery, Parker, Sampson, and Squadron. The elected officials are also urging the Governor to plan a strategic and comprehensive restructuring to take place before these layoffs lead to dramatic service cuts and the limiting of medical education.

"Downstate's services are vital to Brooklyn residents. The population it serves – largely Medicaid recipients and under-served neighborhoods of color – absolutely cannot afford to lose Downstate's services. Impeding Downstate's ability to serve Brooklyn communities would have a devastating impact on the borough in many ways," wrote the elected officials.

"Based on recent information, a restructuring of Downstate is necessary for its long-term sustainability; however, such restructuring must take into account the State's already-significant investment, as well as the institution's critical role in serving our residents, providing diversity in the medical field, and providing home-grown doctors for New York.

"Cutting services and jobs now may help Downstate's ledger in the short-term, but without a credible strategic plan and the input of stakeholders we run the risk of seriously undermining the viability of the institution in the long-term."

The full letter is available below. Signatories include Senator Daniel Squadron, Senator Eric Adams, Senator Kevin Parker, Borough President Marty Markowitz, and Assemblyman Joseph Lentol, as well as Senators John Sampson, Velmanette Montgomery, and Marty Golden, Assemblymembers Peter Abbate, Jr., Inez Barron, James Brennan, Karim Camara, William Colton, Steven Cymbrowitz, Rhoda Jacobs, Vito Lopez, Alan Maisel, Joan Millman, N. Nick Perry, and Helene Weinstein, and Councilmembers Mathieu Eugene, Lewis Fidler, Vincent Gentile, David Greenfield, Brad Lander, Stephen Levin, Michael Nelson, Diana Reyna, and Jumaane Williams.

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