



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Sanders Announces State Funding for Emergency Room Expansion at St. John's

JAMES SANDERS JR. July 6, 2017



Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) joined elected officials and community leaders for a press conference at St. John's Episcopal Hospital, to announce that the site has received \$10.15 million in state funding, and can begin renovations on its emergency department. The hospital had applied for the grant money in 2012, but it had to go through a lengthy approvals process before getting the green light in June.

Senator Sanders has long been a proponent for the expansion funding and worked hard

along with other elected officials - Assembly Members Michele Titus, Stacey Pheffer Amato, then-Assembly Member Phil Goldfeder, Senator Joe Addabbo, Council Member Donovan Richards and members of 1199 SEIU United Health Care Workers, forming a coalition, to ensure that the money finally arrived.

“This is a great day,” Senator Sanders said. “As a resident of the Rockaways who has used the emergency room back when it was built for 15,000 people but it seemed like 45,000 were there when I was there, I knew we had to do better, and now by the grace of God and hard work, we have done better. Since success has a million fathers and failure is an orphan, I would like to take this opportunity to point out one group among many that worked to make this possible and that’s the 1199 community coalition.”

“At first things looked bad for the home team,” Sanders continued, “to some degree no one believed this could be done, except that community coalition and they kept fighting and keeping it alive until others caught the fire. I’m glad that fire spread to Albany and we were able to keep that fire going up there because this is not the only thing that we need. There are other things that we are going to get.”

St. John's serves more than 130,000 people on the peninsula annually. It has 240 beds, more than 400 physicians and 1,500 employees. The new influx of state funding for the emergency department comes from a pot of \$672.9 million in grants that was set aside for New York to improve health care services.

“St. John’s is the only hospital in my district, and indeed, all of Rockaway,” Sanders said.

“Having reliable health care services is literally a matter of life and death. This funding will go a long way in ensuring St. John’s is better prepared to meet our increasingly high demands.”

Built back in the 1950s, the current emergency department at St. John's is about 12,000 square feet and can accommodate 12,000 – 15,000 patients. However, over the years the number of patients visiting the emergency department has ballooned to over 45,000, straining hospital services, and that number is only expected to rise. Now, with the new renovations and expansion, the size of the emergency department will expand to 22,000 square feet and will have over 40 treatment spaces.

"What we are doing here today is a milestone," said St. John's Chief Executive Officer Bishop Lawrence Provenzano. "What has happened through the putting together of all of these multifaceted groups as a coalition to make this day possible is just short of a miracle, but it is a miracle that we are to begin to count on over and over. Bringing together people who have a common goal, a common purpose, recognizing that we put all kinds of differences aside in order to accomplish what is necessary for the care of God's people, particularly in this community is a shining a moment."