



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JOHN WEIS
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

February 15, 2010

Richard Daines, Commissioner
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Commissioner Daines:

Manhattan Community Board 4 is deeply concerned about the prospect of St. Vincent's Hospital closing. For over 160 years, St. Vincent's Hospital has provided emergency care and a full range of health care services to residents of Greenwich Village, Chelsea and other nearby neighborhoods. We urge the NYS Department of Health to work with elected officials, the community, and other stakeholders to find a solution that enables St. Vincent's to continue to serve as an important provider of health services to residents on Manhattan's west side.

We understand that St. Vincent's is facing significant financial problems, but urge the state to continue providing short-term loans while a sustainable restructuring is explored. As part of this process, it is also important to assess the health care needs of the surrounding community and how they can be best met. St. Vincent's mission of serving the poor, uninsured, and those with life-threatening health issues is not just important to the local community, but to the entire city. Indeed, the hospital is a leading provider of health care services to those with HIV / AIDS and mental health issues and it is essential to consider the long-term impact of closing a facility that serves those most in need.

Furthermore, it is deeply important to the community that any solution provides for the continued operation of both the hospital's emergency room and in-patient services. The next closest emergency room is almost three miles away and the across town, which adds to the time and difficulty of getting there. For those with life threatening health care needs, these extra few minutes can be a matter of life and death.

St. Vincent's is also one of the community's largest employers. At a time when many city residents struggle with unemployment, we cannot afford to add almost 6,500 residents to the ranks of the unemployed. Unfortunately, as it was recently announced, over 300 employees have been laid off already. Other workers have been asked to take temporary

pay cuts of 10-25%. While pay cuts are seldom appealing, we believe all available options should be considered at this time. On behalf of all those who rely on St. Vincent's, we urge you to continue working to save this neighborhood institution.

Sincerely,



John Weiss
Chair
Manhattan Community
Board 4



Joe Restuccia
Co-Chair
Housing, Health & Human
Services Committee

[signed 2/16/10]

Dave Hanzel
Co-Chair
Housing, Health, & Human
Services Committee