

CITY OF NEW YORK
PRESIDENT
OF THE
BOROUGH OF STATEN ISLAND



JAMES S. ODDO
PRESIDENT

BOROUGH HALL, STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. 10301

January 27, 2014

Mary Travis Bassett
Commissioner
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
125 Worth Street
New York, New York 10013

Dear Commissioner Bassett:

Please accept our warm and sincere congratulations on your appointment to the post of Commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. We believe that Mayor de Blasio has made an excellent choice and that you will be a great asset to the people of our city, including those we represent.

We very much look forward to working with you on the many pressing health issues that plague Staten Island, which is, by most measures, the unhealthiest of the five boroughs.

We know that Staten Islanders are 33% more likely to suffer from heart disease, the leading cause of death in New York. We are 18% more likely to suffer from malignant neoplasms (the second leading cause of death) and 37% more likely to be afflicted with chronic respiratory disease.

While only 16% of the citywide population smokes, 21% of Staten Islanders still light up, and 24% of Staten Island high school students reported binge drinking in the past 30 days, compared to less than 15% citywide. From 2005 to 2011, Staten Island saw a 261 percent increase in overdose deaths from prescription opiates.

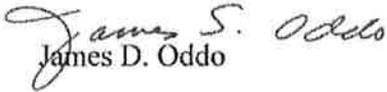
And yet despite these sad statistics, Staten Island remains the only borough in the city without a Health and Hospital Corporation hospital.

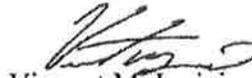
We ask you to help us right these inequities. We ask you to be our strong ally, as we make the health and wellness of our fast-growing borough a prime objective for the next decade and beyond. We ask you to recognize our need for more primary and urgent care facilities and clinics, and we ask you to work with us on grassroots wellness initiatives.

We are confident that when motivated elected officials and responsive government agencies work together, we can accomplish much. Please consider coming to Staten Island to visit, so that you may see for yourself what a vibrant island city we have become; we are larger than the cities of Atlanta or Arlington, Kansas City or Cleveland, Miami or Minneapolis -- and we are poised to grow even more as our economy and population continue to expand.

So, again, congratulations on your appointment. We hope that you will think of us as willing partners, more than eager to match your efforts, and ready roll up our sleeves and work to make Staten Island a safer and healthier place to live and work.

Sincerely,


James D. Oddo


Vincent M. Ignizio
Minority Leader


Deborah Rose
49th Council District


Steven Matteo
50th Council District

JSO:fs