

Brian Byrd  
New York State Health Foundation  
1385 Broadway; 23<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10018

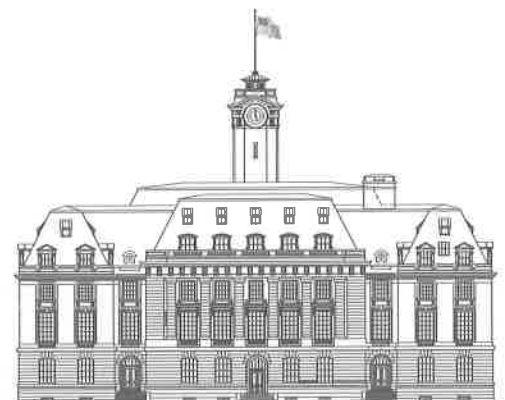
Dear Mr. Byrd:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Richmond County District Attorney's Office's (RCDA) application for a New York State Health Foundation Special Project Grant. These funds will be used to expand and enhance its new Heroin Overdose Prevention and Education (HOPE) initiative.

The HOPE program is an innovative pre-arraignment diversion program that is designed to expand access to treatment by redirecting low-level drug offenders who meet certain NYPD criteria for receipt of DAT to community-based health services instead of moving forward with the prosecution of the case. HOPE is an unprecedented collaboration BETWEEN law enforcement, City and State Health agencies, and community providers to collectively respond to the substance abuse epidemic impacting all Staten Island communities.

Through HOPE Staten Island residents arrested on low-level drug charges, who have little to no criminal record, are given immediate access to peer recovery coaches, naloxone kits and trainings, as well as treatment and services. Those who meaningfully engage in treatment, harm reduction, and/or supportive services for 30 days after the arrest can avoid criminal charges altogether. The purpose of the HOPE program is to reduce overdoses and improve health outcomes by connecting those in need to treatment options and resources. HOPE will also increase public safety by reducing the criminal activity of participants in the program, and diverting persons with substance use disorders away from the criminal justice system.

RCDA also intends to use this New York State Health Foundation Funding to expand its heroin prevention and education outreach by bolstering its workforce capacity in order to: 1) provide adequate coverage across all four of the island's police precincts; and 2) appropriately and effectively engage participants of all ages and backgrounds at different stages of recovery.

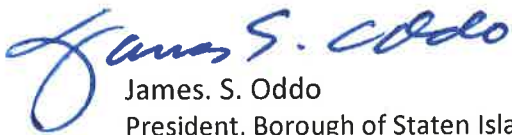


This proposed expansion and enhancement of its HOPE program falls in line with my commitment to a three-pronged approach to stemming Staten Island's drug epidemic through education, prevention and treatment and recovery.

I have been a part of the HOPE planning process since the beginning, with my Director of Health and Wellness, Dr. Ginny Mantello, taking an active role in shaping and implementing the various steps in the program. As you know, Staten Island is in the middle of a full blown drug crisis which claims young lives every week. We are committed to creating solutions for this problem and readily partner with the Richmond County District Attorney's office in their efforts to aggressively seek comprehensive solutions to Staten Island's opioid epidemic.

Again, I reiterate my support for the RCDA's application for a New York State Health Foundation Special Project Grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James S. Oddo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

James. S. Oddo  
President, Borough of Staten Island