

May 10, 2018

Howard A. Zucker, MD., J.D.
Commissioner
New York State Department of Health
Empire State Plaza, Corning Tower
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Commissioner Zucker:

As the Borough President of Staten Island, I have made the health and wellness of our borough's residents a top priority. In accordance with that emphasis, I am writing today to express my support for Staten Island University Hospital's (SIUH) Statewide Health Care Facility Transformation Program Phase II (SHCFTP) grant application. The grant would provide critical funding to support their response to the substance abuse epidemic that has devastated our borough.

As you know, the substance abuse epidemic continues to ravage many communities in New York State, and Staten Island continues to be one of those hardest hit. In 2016, Staten Island had the highest per capita rate of unintentional drug poisoning (overdose) deaths of any borough in New York City. With 31.8 overdose deaths per 100,000 residents, this epidemic knows no economic or geographic boundaries. Behind these numbers is a tragedy words cannot express of young, promising lives lost and families torn apart.

SIUH is the only provider in the borough of life saving inpatient detoxification treatment. Whenever possible, the Hospital also aims to treat residents requiring addiction treatment in outpatient programs, avoiding the need for intensive inpatient care. In 2017, SIUH had almost 2,200 drug detoxification discharges, provided over 9,000 outpatient adult chemical dependency outpatient visits, and provided almost 296,000 opioid treatment (methadone maintenance) visits. With funding support from the State's Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program, in 2017 SIUH began an outpatient withdrawal management program, which provided almost 2,200 visits. Outpatient withdrawal provides an important and innovative treatment option to inpatient care. SIUH integrates its addiction treatment for the community with the psychiatric and medical care an individual may need.



The Hospital's SHCFTP Phase II grant application requests \$7.23 million to create the facilities to support:

- Establishing a new child/adolescent substance abuse/psychiatric dual diagnosis service with a family component and with integrated primary care, and
- Creating a new integrated behavioral/medical (primary care) adult outpatient service at SIUH's South Campus.

The project allows SIUH to expand their continuum of addiction treatment:

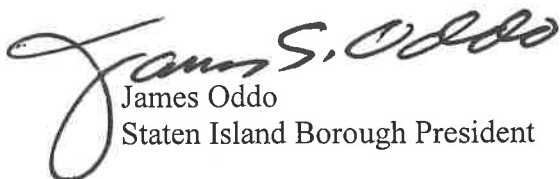
- To provide highly specialized community-based care for children and adolescents, including adolescents with psychiatric dual diagnoses, and
- Increasing access and retention for adults requiring integrated behavioral/medical services in the south of Staten Island (an integrated behavioral/medical service has been established with DSRIP support in the north of Staten Island).

The goals of this grant application are fully aligned with State goals to enhance the continuum of care available to residents affected by the substance abuse epidemic, providing compassionate patient-centered care in the most appropriate settings and minimizing avoidable emergency room and inpatient utilization.

We understand that genuine need far exceeds resources for those institutions that have applied for SHCFTP Phase II grant funding. Surely the need to respond to this terrible epidemic is as critical a priority as any need SHCFTP II funds address. Providing support to a provider to develop new, innovative and effective programs, that would not be viable without grant funding support for required initial infrastructure costs, is the core objective of the SHCFTP II initiative.

With this in mind, I respectfully petition the State to favorably review Staten Island University Hospital's SHCFTP Phase II grant application, which will strengthen and expand the borough's resources to bring innovative, compassionate care to one of our most dire healthcare challenges.

Sincerely,



James Oddo
Staten Island Borough President

CC: Paul Francis, Deputy Secretary for Health and Human Services
Robert Mujica, New York State Budget Director