
Assemblywoman Rhoda Jacobs: Statement on Impending LICH Closure, the State of Brooklyn Hospitals



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I am profoundly concerned about the devastating effects the closure of Long Island College Hospital (LICH)/University will have on the greater Brooklyn community, which is experiencing an ongoing health care crisis. The closure of this major hospital will exacerbate existing problems with access to health care services in Brooklyn, while damaging our already fragile economy. Furthermore, LICH's closure will eliminate all emergency services from that immediate area. Brooklyn simply cannot afford to lose this major health care institution. I am committed to the urgent efforts to keep LICH open and I urge the SUNY Board of Trustees to reconsider its decision and New York State Health Commissioner, Nirav Shah, to take a stand.

As an elected representative for the 42nd Assembly District, I am deeply worried about district residents who rely on LICH's primary care clinics, as well as the health care professionals in our community who work at LICH. The situation is of even greater urgency, as numerous Brooklyn hospitals have closed their doors in the last decade, and six Brooklyn hospitals are facing major financial problems along with the threat of bankruptcy. There are vast areas of Kings County in which primary care is either not available or severely lacking in quality, causing residents to use local emergency rooms for those services.

Moreover, LICH's closure has the potential to bring a crippling blow to Brooklyn's economy, which is still struggling to recover from the recession. Over 2,000 health care jobs could be lost if LICH closes, and local

businesses in proximity to the hospital are expected to lose a tremendous portion of their customer base in the event that LICH shuts its doors.

We are at a critical moment in the future of Brooklyn's health care – the SUNY Board of Trustees and Commissioner Shah have the opportunity to do the right thing for Brooklyn families who rely on LICH's services by reconsidering their decision to recommend the hospital's closure. Once again, given the grave ramifications of closing this vital health care institution, I urge the SUNY Board of Trustees to reassess its decision and to instead recommend that SUNY Downstate attempt the financial reorganization of LICH before taking this irreversible step.

As always, I remain dedicated to preserving jobs, keeping our hospitals open while fighting for improved access to quality, affordable medical services in Brooklyn, and shaping a comprehensive health care system in conjunction with fellow community leaders and health care providers.

