

Queens Civic Congress expresses concern at the total exclusion of much needed health care facilities in the plans shared by the winning bidder for both hospital sites. It remains paramount that the services once provided to Queens residents by St. John's and Mary Immaculate Hospitals get restored. One can only surmise that the Brooklyn realtor/investor seeks to flip both properties -- fellow civic leaders already question why the City and state failed to step in here.

- Corey Bearak, President, Queens Civic Congress

Fear that scandal-plagued builder would flip closed Queens hospitals bought for \$26.6 million

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A scandal-plagued Brooklyn real estate developer has snapped up two shuttered Queens hospitals for \$26.6 million, officials said on Tuesday.

Joshua Guttman is heading an investment group that successfully bid for St. John's Hospital in Elmhurst and Mary Immaculate Hospital in Jamaica. The properties, owned by bankrupt Caritas Health Care, went on auction Friday.

They are eying Mary Immaculate for use as either an educational or religious facility, according to a statement by CB Richard Ellis, the firm that handled the auction. Other options include using the site as offices for a nonprofit or government organization.

The 2-acre St. John's site on Queens Blvd. could be turned into offices, the statement said. Community leaders and elected officials had lobbied to keep the sites open as hospitals.

Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, who is slated to meet with the developers, said Queens is in desperate need of health care facilities. "I am going to try to convince them," she said. "Queens has a population of 2.3 million and 1.6 beds per 1,000 people, while Manhattan has population of 1.5 million and 6.8 beds per 1,000."

Corey Bearak, president of the Queens Civic Congress, said he fears Guttman will "flip" the properties when the economy improves. "We're concerned at the total exclusion of much-needed health care facilities in the plans," said Bearak.

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