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Edit Page

In Your Opinion:

Unacceptable

To The Editor:

Queens Civic Congress, an umbrella organization for more than 110 community and neighborhood groups representing tenants, co-op and condo owners and homeowners living in every part of Queens, expresses its extreme upset and disappointment at the Governor's veto of the Hospital Closure Planning Act sponsored by Sen. Shirley Huntley and Assembly Member Rory Lancman.

Queens legislators led by Lancman and Huntley developed this legislation because we need it and shepherded it through the legislature because NYS and, Queens especially, needs the safeguards afforded communities by this sound legislation. It very simply empowers the NYS Department of Health to reassure our fellow citizens of what steps DOH will take to ensure that adequate health and hospital care resources for affected communities remain in place.

Queens has experienced the closure of three hospitals within the

last year. The Berger Commission found two of these facilities as essential. These closures happen so suddenly and without any adherence to applicable DOH closure regulations. Members of the communities served by the hospitals received little or no advanced notice of their closure. To this day, we do not know how many individuals lost access to primary care providers. These closures have created critically overcrowded Emergency Departments in the hospitals that remain. The surge in patients who require admission when inpatient beds remain full and unavailable forces hospitals to treat patients in spaces inappropriate for such care.

The Hospital Closure Planning Act would require a public hearing within 30 days of notice of a hospital's plans to close, or of its involuntary

closure. This would provide the community served by the hospital an opportunity to voice its concerns. Such a fact-finding hearing would provide vital information as the DOH performs its due diligence in reviewing a hospital's submitted Closure Plan. It would also foster transparency since it would provide information to the communities explaining the reasons for any proposed closing. Many community members currently believe that the DOH closed Mary Immaculate in Jamaica and St. John's Queens Hospital in Elmhurst despite many DOH statements to the contrary.

Queens Civic Congress finds any decision that impedes the provision of adequate health and hospital resources in our communities unacceptable.

Corey Bearak,
President

Page 6 Tribune Oct. 15-21, 2009 • www.queenstribune.com

See also:

[2009-10-13 Disappointment at veto of Hospital Closure Planning Act; Letter to the editor by Queens Civic Congress](#)

[2009-11-04 Auction of Queens hospital sites stirs up controversy \(Crains\) with comment by QCC](#)