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STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PUBLIC HEARING
Knights of Columbus Hall
333 Beach 90th Street
Rockaway Beach, New York
3:00 p.m.
May 10, 2012

P R E S E N T:
NIRAV R. SHAW, Commissioner of Health,
State of New York
JAMES CLANCY, Office of Governmental Affairs
RICHARD COOK, Deputy Commissioner,
Office of Health Systems Management
CELESTE M. JOHNSON, Regional Director,
Department of Health
EDGARDO MARRERO, Assistant Moderator

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2 SPEAKERS:
3 ELISA HINKIN, Nurse
4 MARY CAMPA, Nurse
5 DR. SETH GUTTERMAN, President,
6 Peoples Choice Hospital
7 JOAN SOMMERMEIR, Labor Representative,
8 New York State Nurses Association
9 BERNIE FOYER, Resident
10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER
11 SUSAN GREEN, former Peninsula employee
12 DANIEL ROSILLO, Resident
13 RITA CLOSKY, former Peninsula employee
14 ANNETTE CLARK, Resident
15 JOSEPH LYNCH, Resident
16 PAUL SCHUBERT, Community activist
17 MICHELLE LEBOW, former Peninsula employee
18 RICHARD BERGER, semi-retired EMT
19 BARBARA LARKIN, Resident
20 THE HONORABLE MALCOLM SMITH, State Senator
21 THE HONORABLE SHIRLEY HUNTLEY, State Senator
22 LEONA STERN, Resident
23 PETER SALMON, Resident
24 CLAIRE THOMPSON, RN
25 PHYLLIS REDWICK, Resident

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2 SPEAKERS: (Continued.)
3 THE HONORABLE MICHELLE TITUS, Assemblywoman
4 DR. EDWARD WILLIAMS, President,
5 Far Rockaway NAACP
6 YVETTE GLASGOW, former President,
7 Far Rockaway NAACP
8 ROBERT CAPANO, District Director
9 for Congressman Bob Turner
10 ELIZABETH SULIK, former Peninsula employee
11 LAURA RADER, former Peninsula employee
12 HARVEY RUDNICK, Resident
13 PAULA MACELLI, representing
14 Borough President Helen Marshall
15 KEVIN HOMISH, former Peninsula employee
16 KATHLEEN LAWLESS, former Peninsula employee
17 THE HONORABLE ERIC ULRICH,
18 Member of City Council
19 MARNIE RYAN, Resident
20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER
21 LOUIS DISALVIO, 23rd Assembly
22 District Leader
23 MARILEE KAUFMAN, Resident
24 THE HONORABLE PHILIP GOLDFEDER, Assemblyman
25 LAURA HOPKINS, Resident

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2 SPEAKERS: (Continued.)
3 FELICIA JOHNSON, Resident
4 FLOYD SMITH, Executive Director,
5 Concerned Citizens of Rockaway
6 ANNETTE IRVIN, former chaplain,
7 Peninsula Hospital
8 ANNIE WARDEN, Resident
9 NORMAN SILVERMAN, Resident
10 CHRISTINE MCGRATH, Resident
11 DR. WAYNE DODAKIAN, former
12 Peninsula employee
13 LILLIAN BENJAMIN, Resident
14 MAUREEN KRAUSE, Resident
15 SHAWN MCLENDON, Former Peninsula employee
16 MATT BISHOP, CEO, I GIVE MORE.
17 MR. JODIS, Resident
18 QUEEN MCKAVAH, Resident
19 STEVEN GREENBERG, Past member,
20 Peninsula Board of Trustees
21 FRAN STAFFIS, Resident
22 JOAN RENNEHAM, Registered Nurse,
23 Peninsula Extended Care Facility
24 MARGARET WAGNER, Resident
25 CATHY MALLON, Resident

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2 SPEAKERS: (Continued.)
3 ALISSA RYAN, Resident
4 KATIE QUINCERRA, former Peninsula employee
5 TOM HANNON, Resident
6 LANNIE KAZNER, Resident
7 PAT ROCHFORD, Resident
8 PHYLLIS PRAWZINSKI, Former Peninsula
9 employee
10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER
11 ALEXIS SMALLWOOD, Resident
12 PETER STEUBEN, Resident
13 LAURIE PALADINO, Administrator,
14 Ocean Promenade Center for Nursing
15 and Rehab
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1 May 10, 2012

2 MS. JOHNSON: Good afternoon. I
3 would like to take care of some
4 housekeeping information. Before I do
5 that, I want to introduce myself.
6 Celeste Johnson, State Health
7 Department. With us here at the table
8 are Commissioner Nirav Shah, Jim Clancy
9 from the Government Affairs Department,
10 and from the Department of Health, Rick
11 Cook, who runs the Office of Health
12 Systems Management.

13 We have four hours for this
14 forum. We are going to allow as many
15 people as possible to speak during this
16 time. You should seek a card in the
17 back from Mr. Gerard Ganini, who will
18 give you cards. Each speaker will have
19 five minutes to speak. It will be
20 timed. If you don't wish to speak, we
21 have also provided you with sheets to
22 write down your comments, and we will
23 gladly take them.

24 There are staff members here
25 identified by badges if you need any

1 May 10, 2012
2 questions answered. For housekeeping
3 purposes, the men's room is on the
4 bottom floor. The ladies room is on
5 the top floor. We thank you.

6 I guess we want to start with one
7 through five. Please come to the
8 microphone. Thank you. Also, we have
9 a wireless for those who are not able
10 to come up to the mic. We will provide
11 you with a wireless.

12 COMMISSIONER SHAH: I just want
13 to thank everyone first for coming and
14 sharing with us your views. We take
15 this very seriously, and we appreciate
16 the opportunity to hear what you have
17 to say, and to learn from it. So thank
18 you.

19 It is going to be a long day. We
20 want to respect everyone's time. If
21 you have comments that you have heard
22 before, please limit your comments so
23 that more can speak. We want to try to
24 get as many folks as possible to be
25 able to air their views, and so that we

1 May 10, 2012

2 get a full picture. Thank you so much.

3 MS. HINKIN: Likewise, thank you
4 for coming to Rockaway, and we welcome
5 you. My name is Elisa Hinkin. I'm a
6 nurse for 35 years, and have been a
7 nurse consultant in home health care
8 for the last 24. I am thoroughly
9 familiar with the Department of Health
10 statements of deficiencies and plans of
11 correction.

12 According to Public Health Law 2801G.3,
13 the forum presented today is in
14 violation of said law. New York State
15 Department of Health did not publically
16 post to its web site the location of
17 the public forum until the afternoon,
18 I'm a little nervous, excuse me, until
19 the afternoon of May 4th, only six days
20 prior to this required meeting.

21 According to said law, a minimum of 10
22 days notice is to be given. As you
23 know, partial compliance of the law is
24 unacceptable. Evidence of such
25 violation is hereby submitted as H1.

1 May 10, 2012

2 Boy, am I nervous. Thank you. Could I
3 sit? I think it is your star power,
4 since I know of your names intimately
5 for so many years. Mr. Cook,
6 especially.

7 On April 5, 2012, DOH's Public Health
8 and Health Planning Council, Special
9 Committee on Establishment and Project
10 Review reviewed Laurie Lapin Jones'
11 application, and the same day, Public
12 Health and Health Planning Council
13 recommended approval of her position as
14 trustee to oversee the hospital to
15 supplant the Board of Directors as the
16 governing authority, as well as control
17 over the operations of hospital. Her
18 character and competence in regard to
19 her employment as an attorney is not in
20 question.

21 The question of her experience as
22 a sole administrator, sole governing
23 authority of a hospital was not
24 considered by the Department at any
25 time. Her sole health care background

1 May 10, 2012
2 is as a member of the Board of
3 Directors of the Organization for
4 Autism Research since 2005. Ms. Jones
5 lacks both the experience and education
6 regarding governing and operating a
7 hospital. I submit such evidence
8 labeled H2.

9 Further, Ms. Jones submitted a
10 preliminary, incomplete and a knowingly
11 unacceptable plan of correction to the
12 Department for review. Ms. Jones is an
13 expert in the protection of assets on
14 behalf of the creditors in cases of
15 bankruptcy. To the disservice of the
16 community, she has protected those
17 creditors. To the disservice of the
18 community, she single handedly, through
19 the authorization of New York State
20 Department of Health, stopped the
21 process of correcting the deficiencies
22 regarding the lab services, and
23 surrendered the hospital's operating
24 certificate to the state. This
25 afternoon at 1:15 p.m., a Nassau County

1 May 10, 2012
2 ambulance could not go to Saint John's
3 Episcopal Hospital because it was not
4 available, and was asking the 911
5 operator, because I live in Nassau
6 County, for permission to go to
7 Peninsula Hospital. The 911 operator
8 had to inform the ambulance that
9 Peninsula is closed.

10 Now the person could not go to
11 Long Beach for whatever reason. That
12 was also mentioned. Finally, the
13 ambulance was diverted to Jamaica
14 Hospital. The Rockaways need a second
15 emergency room on the peninsula. By
16 possibly adding 17 more beds at Saint
17 John's emergency room, it is not only
18 going to increase travel time for the
19 residents from Breezy, Fort Tilden,
20 Neponset, Belle Harbor, Broad Channel,
21 Rockaway Park and Rockaway Beach,
22 adding 17 more beds at Saint John's
23 does not change the fact that they
24 cannot physically handle more than one
25 emergency 911 ambulance in their

1 May 10, 2012
2 ambulance bay now. There is no turn
3 around, there is no physical area from
4 which to expand those bays.

5 MS. CAMPA: Hi. My name is Mary
6 Campa. I was a nurse at Peninsula
7 Hospital up until February of this
8 year, and now I work at the nursing
9 home. On or about March 18th, I was
10 taking care of a 73 year old female. I
11 will call her Miss M. I know that she
12 was having a change of mental status.
13 She was leaning towards one side, and
14 she was unable to speak. She was
15 aphasic. We called an ambulance, and
16 it took her an hour and a half to get
17 there. When the ambulance came, they
18 told us they would have to take her to
19 Jamaica Hospital, because Saint John's
20 was on diversion. They apologized for
21 the delay because the ambulances were
22 all backed up because of the
23 diversions. In a case where a patient
24 has a stroke, every second is crucial.
25 Once again, we have normal transport of

1 May 10, 2012
2 these patients ourselves over to
3 Peninsula emergency room, a designated
4 stroke center, but that was closed down
5 by New York State DOH. Yet, that is
6 another example of how seriously this
7 compromises patient care.

8 On or about March 9, 2012, a
9 female approximately 60 years old that
10 I will call Miss D went into
11 respiratory distress and became
12 unresponsive. Since Peninsula's ER was
13 on diversion, per DOH ruling, we were
14 forced to call 911, and that is when we
15 initiated CPR on this patient. While
16 waiting for the ambulance to arrive,
17 the patient subsequently died. We did
18 everything right. Prior to closing the
19 Peninsula Hospital, we would transport
20 the patient over to the emergency room,
21 which is physically connected to the
22 nursing home, and it would only take
23 minutes to run this patient over for
24 life saving treatment. I know we are
25 not the only nursing home that goes

1 May 10, 2012
2 through this. There are many nursing
3 homes in Far Rockaway. Listed below
4 are the bed capacities in Far Rockaway.
5 There are approximately 16 nursing
6 homes that I have, and there are 3,393
7 nursing home beds. In assisted living
8 facilities, I have approximately 13.
9 That is 1,796 beds. A total of 5,186
10 nursing home and assisted living beds
11 in Far Rockaway. If at any time these
12 facilities are near or at their
13 capacity, where are these patients to
14 go for urgent care?

15 With Saint John's on diversion so
16 often due to the closing of Peninsula
17 Hospital, many of these patients will
18 not make it they will have to be
19 transferred to facilities off the
20 peninsula. This tragic eventuality is
21 totally inhumane, unacceptable and
22 avoidable. As such, I am urging DOH to
23 reevaluate this before lives are lost.

24 MS. JOHNSON: Before the next
25 speaker comes on, I just want to let

1 May 10, 2012
2 you know that there are signers here
3 for those who are impaired.

4 DR. GUTTERMAN: Hi. I am
5 Dr. Seth Gutterman. I am president of
6 Peoples Choice Hospital, and the short
7 answer is we want to reopen Peninsula
8 Hospital. You will hear time and time,
9 as you already heard, of the quality
10 issues for the reasons to reopen the
11 hospital or come up with some health
12 care solution. Our goal is for you
13 guys to hear the quality issues that
14 are of a health care crisis nature. I
15 brought you an action plan on how to
16 move from the position that you are at
17 to reopening the hospital.

18 Basically, our company has three
19 divisions. We have a financing arm, we
20 have a senior management arm of doctors
21 and people who have worked on the front
22 lines as well as at the senior
23 management. We have the technology on
24 line where we can make the hospital
25 paperless in six months of going live.

1 May 10, 2012

2 In other words delivering 21st
3 century to technology community
4 hospitals. Right now, obviously, you
5 are not unfamiliar with this.
6 Community hospitals all around the
7 country are closing. Any community
8 hospital in a financially distressed
9 area is closing because they cannot
10 manage the day to day needs of quality
11 care for the 21st century, because they
12 are dealing with 20th century
13 financing, 20th century management and
14 20th century technology. What we have
15 had a lot of experience with in each
16 arm of our company is turning around
17 financially distressed hospitals with
18 good financing models. In other words,
19 low interest rates, with senior
20 managers that actually have been on the
21 front lines. We have many from the New
22 York area that are interested in
23 participating in this program. Then we
24 actually own OMC certified software by
25 CMS to put the entire hospital, doctors

1 May 10, 2012
2 offices, health agencies and even
3 patient's homes on one computer system.
4 One patient, one chart and one
5 database. We are here to help you if
6 you want to do this. We are a boutique
7 company. I want there to be
8 transparency. My company has been very
9 successful in all three arms; in the
10 financing arm, in the senior management
11 arm, and in putting hospitals, making
12 them paperless with 21 century
13 technology certified by the OMC.

14 This would be the first time all
15 three arms of our company would come
16 together to take a community hospital
17 and take all three areas under one
18 umbrella so it an actually create a
19 beacon, a shining light of what a 21st
20 century hospital, community hospital
21 could look like and thrive in a
22 financially distressed area, thrive
23 with good management and thrive with
24 prevention. One of the biggest issues
25 in the importance of saving New York as

1 May 10, 2012
2 well as other states is you want to
3 prevent disease, and you want to
4 prevent the exacerbation of existing
5 diseases. I will make the argument
6 that you need an acute care hospital.
7 A multi specialty plank is not enough.
8 It goes part of the way. But an acute
9 care hospital not for the admissions,
10 but for all the outpatient procedures,
11 whether it be outpatient heart
12 procedures, biopsy, endoscopy, advanced
13 radiology studies that you really can't
14 do that well in a multi specialty
15 clinic. You need an acute care
16 facility to do it. We can either go
17 with a brand new hospital which will
18 take years, or you take a hospital like
19 Peninsula, which has a decent structure
20 and we can bring in the financing, we
21 can bring in the senior management and
22 we can bring in the 21st century
23 technology to make this hospital I
24 literally promise you paperless within
25 the first six months of us taking

1 May 10, 2012

2 ownership.

3 Here is the issue. There are a
4 lot of difficult problems in front of
5 you. You know the biggest one. The
6 laboratory is closed. The trustees are
7 about to sell off the assets. There
8 are multiple things, but with the
9 community activists, the local
10 politicians, companies like mine or any
11 other company like mine and the
12 Department of Health would sit down at
13 the table, I am confident, it won't be
14 easy, but we can work out a win win for
15 everybody. The problem with the
16 bankruptcy courts as bankruptcy laws
17 knew, the only thing that bankruptcy
18 law is responsible to right now is to
19 the creditors.

20 Unfortunately, bankruptcy law has
21 no responsibility to keeping jobs and
22 it has no responsibility to keeping
23 health care. That is where bankruptcy
24 law has fallen short, and we need the
25 politicians to step in and tell the

1 May 10, 2012
2 courts, hey, slow down. If there is a
3 win win for the creditors and a win win
4 for the community, a win win for the
5 hospital it should be entertained. It
6 shouldn't just be shut down because a
7 trustee wanted to quickly make money
8 for the creditors. We have seen this
9 time and time again in bankruptcy law.
10 They have no responsibility to the
11 community, to maintaining jobs, and in
12 that case health care. But I honestly
13 believe as a team, if the Department of
14 Health is willing to sit down with the
15 community activists, with the local
16 politicians, with companies like mine,
17 we will come up with a win win for all
18 parties. Thank you.

19 MS. SOMMERMEIR: Good afternoon.
20 My name is Joan Sommermeir, and I am a
21 labor representative for the New York
22 State Nurses Association. Thank you
23 for giving me this opportunity to speak
24 about the urgent need for comprehensive
25 acute care for this community. The New

1 May 10, 2012
2 York State Nurses Association
3 represents is more than 35,000
4 registered nurses throughout New York
5 State. From 1975 until 2008, this
6 included 200 registered nurses at
7 Peninsula Hospital Center. Although
8 these registered nurses are no longer
9 our members, they remain our
10 colleagues. We too watched in agony as
11 Medisys began to mismanage and choke
12 the hospital to death. Sadly, after
13 104 years of service to this community,
14 Peninsula closed its doors. The Nurses
15 Association still shares Peninsula
16 nurses' concern about their own
17 welfare, but especially about their
18 concern for the community and access to
19 care. Peninsula Hospital may have been
20 small, but it played a vital role here
21 in the Rockaways. It has always been a
22 safety net for the uninsured and the
23 under insured. Regardless of the
24 patient's personal status, everyone was
25 treated with the same degree of care,

1 May 10, 2012
2 attention, dignity and respect, whether
3 the patient was a six year old with a
4 twisted ankle or a single mother
5 without health insurance.
6 Seven years ago, a report from the
7 Berger Commission claimed that a
8 fundamental driver of the crisis in our
9 health care delivery system is excess
10 capacity. Nurses that we represent,
11 and who are our colleagues, care for
12 patients in hospitals, and then they
13 firmly disagreed with that statement,
14 and we disagree with it now.
15 The acuity of patient population
16 actually has increased over the past
17 seven years. Patients are less likely
18 to be admitted and more likely to be
19 discharged from hospitals more quickly.
20 Our concern today is that the Health
21 Department and the Board of Trustees
22 will not move beyond the quick
23 financial fix that they failed to take
24 the steps were needed to ensure
25 adequate access to care, and the future

1 May 10, 2012
2 of the Rockaway communities. From our
3 experience, closing hospitals typically
4 failed to produce the promised savings,
5 and often leads to greater expenses.
6 It does not save millions of dollars
7 for tax payers. It does not solve the
8 critical problems facing our health
9 care system such as people without
10 health care coverage, and the glaring
11 imbalance in access to care.
12 What will happen to this community's
13 low income and elderly who have come to
14 rely on Peninsula's services? What
15 will happen to those who cannot travel
16 to other medical centers in the region?
17 What will happen in an emergency when
18 time is of the essence? The Rockaway
19 residents are scared, and they are
20 angry. Now is the time for our leaders
21 to stand up and do what is right. Now
22 is the time to step up and guarantee
23 that this community will continue to be
24 cared for by a first class, full
25 service health care facility. I thank

1 May 10, 2012

2 you for your time.

3 MR. FOYER: Hi, good afternoon.
4 I am Bernie Foyer I live here in
5 Rockaway, and during the summer, I
6 worked at the National Park Service,
7 and I run the parking lot at Reis Park.
8 I have done this for 11 years. Let me
9 give you a scenario that happens two,
10 three or more times every year. We are
11 in the midst of a heat wave.
12 Temperatures are in the 90s. It is a
13 Saturday or a Sunday. We end up with
14 4,000 or 5,000 additional cars coming
15 onto this peninsula in the Reis Park
16 parking lot. With all this heat, it
17 happens that all of a sudden, giant
18 thunderstorms pop up. All of a sudden,
19 we have torrential rains, we have
20 lightning, we have thunder. Everybody
21 all at once takes off from the beach.
22 They get out the parking lot, and we
23 have gridlock, because on the Marine
24 Parkway Bridge, it is two lanes that is
25 all going out of Rockaway, and all the

1 May 10, 2012
2 traffic backs up. You have got the
3 same thing with the Cross Bay Bridge.
4 Now if ambulances are on diversion off
5 the peninsula, on those days, they are
6 not going to get out of Rockaway for
7 hours, because these gridlocks and the
8 going across the bridges can take hours
9 people are going to die because they
10 wont get off the peninsula here. That
11 is why we need the second hospital
12 here, because they are not going to
13 leave Rockaway.

14 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Thank you.
15 I want to ask number six through 10 to
16 come back up. But before I do that, I
17 just want to recognize some of the
18 elected officials in the audience. We
19 have got Senator Shirley Huntley,
20 Senator Malcolm Smith, and I believe we
21 have got Senator Addabo in the back,
22 and we have representatives from the
23 Borough President and from Congressman
24 Turner's office. Have I missed
25 anybody? Yes, and Congressman Sanzar.

1 May 10, 2012

2 Thank you very much for being here.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good
4 evening. Correction, good afternoon,
5 although it should be good evening. As
6 you sit and listen to nurses telling
7 true stories about people who died, I
8 don't know how that doesn't move you.
9 These are people who would be alive and
10 breathing, but they are not. They are
11 not because they couldn't get the
12 proper medical care. This is just the
13 beginning. We live in a very unique
14 area, as Mr. Foyer had just said. We
15 are beach front and bay front. Every
16 summer, there are people pulled out of
17 our ocean. Some make it and some
18 don't. But what are the odds for those
19 making it who now have to head for
20 Saint John's? It might be a little
21 crowded in the emergency room, so they
22 are going to Jamaica. Or if they are a
23 Neponset drowning, they will have to
24 get over the bridge to Brooklyn. This
25 is not just a bankruptcy money issue.

1 May 10, 2012

2 This is most importantly a human being
3 issue.

4 We have a gentlemen from a company, I
5 think I remember Peoples Choice,
6 standing and telling you what his
7 company is willing to do and work with
8 you. In time, I imagine credit is
9 being paid. This is should be your
10 first priority. This is a not
11 bankruptcy case, where business is
12 closing down. This is the bankruptcy
13 case where people will die.

14 Personally, I know of someone in my
15 family did not make it to an emergency
16 room. Or if they did, they suffered
17 more medical complications. I would go
18 after this city big time, because it
19 seems that the city is getting to the
20 point where if you don't go after the
21 pocketbook, they do not hear you.

22 Thanks.

23 MS. GREEN: Good afternoon. My
24 name is Susan Green. Welcome,
25 Dr. Shah, elected officials and

1 May 10, 2012
2 everybody else that was willing to come
3 and hear us. I am a former employee of
4 Peninsula Hospital Center. I am a
5 laboratory technologist that has worked
6 in that laboratory for 41 years. I
7 want to welcome you to the Rockaway
8 Peninsula. We are now officially in a
9 state of emergency. Only one hospital
10 open, and no functioning blood bank at
11 all. North Shore LIJ has been running
12 Saint Johns' blood bank since December
13 of 2011. The blood work is being sent
14 to LIJ to be processed. It is now
15 known that LIJ will be running their
16 laboratory for the next couple of
17 years, just as they do in Saint
18 Joseph's in Bethpage, Long Island.
19 Saint John's needed help to bring up
20 their standards. They were given help
21 instead of being closed. Brookdale
22 in Brooklyn is also a part of Medisys,
23 and they are being given help. They
24 are being told to go in there and
25 restructure. Why them and not us? We

1 May 10, 2012
2 have been duped. Why did the
3 Department of Health go after Peninsula
4 Hospital? Do you honestly think it is
5 possible for Saint John's to carry the
6 entire peninsula? The area by Saint
7 John's is totally congested. Narrow
8 one way streets, private homes,
9 apartment buildings, no parking, and an
10 overcrowded emergency room. It is just
11 a joke. Isn't the Department of Health
12 and Saint John's worried about HCAPS?
13 HCAPS stands for Hospital Consumer
14 Assessment of Health Care Providers in
15 Systems. It is a national survey that
16 evaluates the care and satisfaction of
17 patients with their hospital care by
18 asking questions of discharged
19 patients. The level of patient
20 satisfaction determines the level of
21 payment to the hospital by the
22 government. Low customer satisfaction
23 scores means low pay. The higher the
24 level of satisfaction, the higher the
25 payment. Patient satisfaction results

1 May 10, 2012
2 are publicized.
3 There are 133,000 people on the
4 peninsula. The beaches will be open at
5 the end of the month, bringing in about
6 10,000 people a week to this area.
7 Aren't these people entitled to proper
8 health care? It is totally unfair. I
9 grew up in the neighborhood with Andrew
10 Cuomo. We have five hospitals at our
11 fingertips. They were all five to ten
12 minutes away. Why doesn't anybody care
13 about the sick, poor and the elderly?
14 They have a right to a good life and
15 proper health care. Do the right thing
16 for them. We elected all of the
17 officials. You work for us. We put
18 you in office and we will work hard to
19 take you out if you don't give us
20 something that we really need. This is
21 not a threat, this is a promise. I
22 don't live in this neighborhood. I
23 come from Suffolk County every day to
24 help people of Rockaway, and I want to
25 know where this man is today. This is

1 May 10, 2012
2 Governor Cuomo's picture. Where is he
3 today? He should be here. This is a
4 state of emergency.

5 MS. CLOSKY: Good afternoon. My
6 name is Rita Closky, and I am also a
7 member of the Peninsula Hospital
8 laboratory for over 36 years. As a
9 member of the hospital laboratory, I
10 was shocked when I learned that the
11 hospital was shutting its doors based
12 on a DOH inspection of February of 24,
13 2012. Yes, there were deficiencies,
14 yes, we needed to make corrections,
15 yes, we needed improvement. But there
16 is no way that these citations should
17 have ever led to the closure of the
18 institution.
19 We were given ample resources to make
20 all of the corrections needed, and we
21 did. We were virtually a brand new
22 laboratory. Yet no one from DOH would
23 take the time to come and see what we
24 had done, and how up to date we were.
25 I can only ask one question. Why?

1 May 10, 2012

2 Based on an incomplete, preliminary

3 plan of correction submitted by the

4 trustee, Lorie Lapin Jones, signed by

5 someone we did not know and reviewed by

6 some unknown source. I don't believe

7 this. I worked in the blood bank, and

8 on the day of inspection, the blood

9 bank inspector commented that the room

10 was too hot. There were platelets on a

11 rotator, and she told me that these

12 platelets were compromised due to the

13 heat. Yet a little while later, the

14 floor nurse came to the blood bank to

15 pick up the platelets for infusion.

16 Not only did the inspector allow these

17 compromised platelets to be transfused,

18 but she followed the nurse to the floor

19 to witness the entire procedure. She

20 return to the lab satisfied. I suppose

21 the blood products in question were not

22 so compromised after all. On the same

23 day, blood gas specimens came to the

24 lab from an outside nursing home by

25 courier. The chemistry inspector asked

1 May 10, 2012
2 many questions about these specimens.
3 Who was the courier, where did the
4 specimens come from, when were they
5 drawn. Did the courier come directly
6 to the lab or could he have stopped for
7 lunch before bringing them to the lab.
8 He had many questions about the
9 validity of these blood specimens.
10 However, he let the tech do all the
11 testing and report out the results. He
12 too thought these specimens were
13 compromised but allowed the work to go
14 out.
15 It seems to me that the DOH inspectors
16 were only concerned about the work our
17 lab was doing for a published report.
18 But in actuality they were clearly
19 satisfied that patients were not being
20 compromised at all. I say this is why
21 you close a lab, and this is why you
22 close a hospital, serving a community
23 for over 104 years? This is why you
24 put lives at risk? There has to be a
25 better explanation than lab

1 May 10, 2012
2 deficiencies. So I reiterate what is
3 the real reason Peninsula Hospital is
4 closed?

5 MR. ROSILLO: First of all, let
6 me thank you for speaking. My name is
7 Daniel Rosillo. I am a resident of
8 Rockaway Park, and I just don't get it.
9 I don't know how you could do something
10 like this to the community. Also to
11 let you know, my wife is a family
12 member, and yes, I was one of those
13 family members that had to get rushed
14 to Peninsula Hospital, and I am not
15 going to get into why. I had breathing
16 problems twice in one year, and thank
17 God I made it there. It's a great
18 staff, it's a great hospital, and I
19 will always say that.

20 Another thing is we talked about the
21 beach. This is a beach community. We
22 have a lot of people coming, like
23 Bernie said. You have drownings, you
24 get people that hurt on the beach. We
25 know for a fact that Saint John's is

1 May 10, 2012
2 going to be overwhelmed. We have an
3 overwhelmed staff. What kind of job
4 are you going to get out of an
5 overwhelmed staff at a hospital? That
6 doesn't go, that doesn't go, no where.
7 Second of all, he is also right about
8 the gridlock. But even beside the
9 gridlock, you have got people coming
10 out of Breezy. Suppose they decided
11 that they didn't want to go to Saint
12 John's Hospital, and they said make a
13 left, let's go to Coney Island
14 Hospital, let's go here, and the bridge
15 goes up, which goes up three times a
16 year. How would you like to be in that
17 ambulance with a heart attack? I doubt
18 in 21 minutes that you are going to
19 make it to the hospital. That is all I
20 have to say.

21 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: I just
22 want to have the next folks come up. I
23 believe we have got 11 through 15. I
24 would like to recognize Assembly
25 Members Goldfeder and Titus. Thank you

1 May 10, 2012

2 for coming.

3 MS. CLARK: Good afternoon. My
4 name is Annette Clark. I am a
5 resident. I live down the block, and
6 sometimes we need Peninsula because
7 there is a respiratory center there
8 that does the asthmatic people. It is
9 crucial for anyone, especially a young
10 child or an older person. We can be
11 there with cardiac arrest within less
12 than three minutes.
13 Unfortunately, 2010, I got kidney
14 failure. I was called by my doctor to
15 go to the emergency room immediately.
16 Kidney failure. For me? Probably I
17 figured oh, well, maybe in another
18 couple of hours, two weeks, three
19 weeks, it would be fine. Well, it
20 wasn't fine. I had no kidney function
21 at all. If it was not for Peninsula
22 Hospital, I would be dead right now and
23 not able to speak to you. I was on
24 dialysis immediately. They gave me
25 vascular in the chest with catheters.

1 May 10, 2012

2 I did not go to Saint John's after I
3 left Peninsula. I didn't go to Saint
4 John's dialysis center because I would
5 have to be there at 10:00 in the
6 evening to be there until 10:00 in the
7 morning.

8 There is only one center in this
9 Rockaway, and that is Saint John's.
10 Peninsula Hospital had four machines,
11 and I think it is disgraceful that the
12 Department of Health sits there and
13 shuts down a hospital that is needed
14 desperately in this area. So where do
15 we have to go for dialysis now? We
16 have got to go either to Brooklyn or
17 you have got to go to South Nassau, and
18 that where I went. I cooked at 4
19 o'clock, we left at a quarter to 5:00.
20 I was there by 6:30, and I was on the
21 machine until midnight. This went on
22 and on and on. I asked God to either
23 take me or to fix it. Thank God for
24 the mercy of God, he did fix it. I am
25 no longer on dialysis, but that doesn't

1 May 10, 2012

2 mean I have kidney function. I only
3 have 30 percent of one kidney. If I am
4 in trouble again, where do I go? To
5 Saint John's, where you have got to sit
6 in an emergency room that not only
7 takes Saint John's people, you are
8 taking Peninsula's people too. So you
9 are in an emergency room, and what am I
10 supposed to do, go to South Nassau in
11 Long Island? Mercy Hospital? I know
12 personally in the last month, I should
13 say three weeks ago, there are four
14 people, very good friends of mine that
15 have passed away. Three of them is
16 because they were diverted. If they
17 had emergency care when they were
18 supposed to have emergency care, and
19 the ambulance came when they were
20 supposed to be, they would be alive
21 today.

22 I think it is despicable that you do
23 this to people. That not only do we
24 have all this construction and you
25 can't get in and out of the place to

1 May 10, 2012
2 begin with. But an ambulance comes
3 down here, they were coming from here,
4 and they were going on the opposite
5 side of the traffic to get through
6 traffic here. It is appalling to me
7 that the Department of Health would
8 allow something like this to happen.
9 You should be ashamed of yourselves,
10 all of you.

11 MR. LYNCH: Good afternoon. My
12 name is Joe Lynch. I have resided in
13 the Rockaway Peninsula for over 50
14 years. Rockaway is indeed a close knit
15 community of hard working middle class
16 families. I have always supported the
17 City and the State when called upon,
18 both financially and economically. We
19 also pay our fair share of taxes to
20 both the City and the State. I
21 currently serve on the Board of
22 Directors of the Breezy Point
23 Cooperative. I am also the Chairman of
24 the Breezy Point Cooperative, the
25 largest cooperative of single family

1 May 10, 2012

2 dwellings and private residences in the

3 city and the state. Our cooperative is

4 nestled in the extreme western tip of

5 this Rockaway Peninsula. It includes

6 families, the Peoples Association of

7 Roxbury, the Rockaway Planning

8 Association and the Point Breezy

9 Association. I speak tonight on behalf

10 of fellow shareholders as well as my

11 neighbors in Rockaway Beach, Broad

12 Channel, Belle Harbor and Neponset. We

13 all have a common goal and a bond,

14 which is a continuation of the ongoing

15 operation of Peninsula Hospital,

16 Rockaway's very needed community health

17 center.

18 Just some quick points. Why should we

19 continue to pay our fair share of taxes

20 when the state and city continue to

21 give us inequitable and unfair return

22 of city and state services? Train

23 service, sanitation and now it appears

24 medical response and services for our

25 hard earned dollars. Being on the most

1 May 10, 2012
2 extreme western point in Queens, the
3 families of Breezy Point will be the
4 community most adversely affected by
5 the permanent closure of this hospital.
6 Once again, the citizens of Breezy
7 Point are getting dealt an unfair hand
8 relative to their tax contributions to
9 the city and the state. The additional
10 time needed to get to an alternative
11 health facility from the Rockaways in a
12 medical emergency, especially on a
13 beautiful summer day, will surely
14 result in loss of life, especially
15 where minutes and seconds can mean all
16 the difference.
17 For numerous years, our residents and
18 the community relied heavily on the
19 services of positive medical response
20 we received for medical problems at
21 Peninsula Hospital. They also never
22 let us down. I also saw first hand
23 various medical emergencies involving
24 my own family, the dedication,
25 commitment and professionalism of the

1 May 10, 2012
2 physicians, nurses and staff. We in
3 Rockaway truly viewed this facility as
4 our medical lifeline. Unfortunately
5 the New York State Department of Health
6 has now replaced our lifeline with
7 medical uncertainty. The Breezy Point
8 Cooperative and the western Rockaway
9 Peninsula represent middle class
10 families, with a historically
11 documented work ethic, real involvement
12 in our communities, pride in our
13 country, similar ethnic and religious
14 beliefs, and an ongoing commitment to
15 the protection of our families, homes
16 and the neighborhood. Rockaway, as
17 well documented, also paid a very heavy
18 toll on 911. Many city workers, New
19 York City fire fighters, New York City
20 Police and New York City teachers
21 remain the true backbone and the
22 foundation of Rockaway and the Breezy
23 Point communities. This hard working
24 citizen base, along with all Rockaway
25 residents, need and demand a community

1 May 10, 2012

2 and local hospital, something that the

3 trustee and DOH have failed to realize.

4 We deserve nothing less.

5 I really do not understand how a

6 reported lab problem, which also

7 appears very correctable to the

8 impartial, non medical observer,

9 somehow can shut down a long standing

10 hospital. Something in this equation

11 does not add up. Several very

12 dedicated members of the Peninsula

13 Hospital Board of Directors have had

14 discussions with interested parties on

15 potential funding alternatives. For

16 whatever reason, the trustees from the

17 Department of Health appeared to have

18 their minds made up on the final

19 outcome from the start. In fact, the

20 media advisory announcing today's

21 meeting states that it is to solicit

22 public comments on health services in

23 the Far Rockaway Queens community

24 following the closure of Peninsula. As

25 far as DOH is concerned, this appears

1 May 10, 2012

2 to have always been a done deal. The
3 needed and fully expected public proper
4 due diligence criteria in this decision
5 process appears very lacking. In fact,
6 the Department of Health had no
7 intentions for any public hearing on
8 this prior to pressure from political
9 leaders, former employees and staff,
10 and the dedicated board members still
11 working proactively to save Rockaway's
12 hospital.

13 The Commission of the New York State
14 Department of Health, as I read it on
15 your web site, is to protect, improve
16 and promote the health, productivity
17 and well being of New York.

18 MR. MARRERO: Sir, please wrap
19 up.

20 MR. LYNCH: My community of the
21 Breezy Point Co-op consisting over
22 10,000 hard working citizens, believes
23 that your closure of Peninsula Hospital
24 has only sabotaged that mission. Thank
25 you.

1 May 10, 2012

2 MR. SCHUBERT: Good afternoon,
3 esteemed members of the public and the
4 Health Department. I give a thanks to
5 Joe Addabo, Michele Titus and the other
6 elected representatives. My name is
7 Paul Schubert. I am known by some as
8 Tiger Paul, community activist. To my
9 credits so far, I have 15 wheel chair
10 ramps, three traffic lights through the
11 good offices and help of Audrey
12 Pfeiffer. I want to bring out some
13 powerful words. Liability,
14 accountability, Article 15, New York
15 State Penal Code. Which clearly states
16 that if through the action or inaction
17 of an individual, including government
18 officials, and someone dies, someone
19 suffers grievous physical injury. Joe
20 Addabo has promised me he is going to
21 increase the penalty on this law. I
22 also want to bring out the asthma,
23 chronic asthma from Breezy Point to
24 Bayswater. Its source is the
25 manufactured gas plant owned by

1 May 10, 2012

2 National Grid. The bad smell in the
3 air has been the cause of all the
4 cancer in the Rockaways. I can bring
5 in testimony from Jamaica Bay Wild Life
6 Refuge Rangers. They smell the odor of
7 coal tar. Your shutting down this
8 hospital, means all the people who have
9 cancer in the Rockaways, all our
10 mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmas
11 who died, three teachers in the
12 scholars academy.

13 So I do want to make it known that we
14 are going to hold you accountable,
15 liable. We are now video taping this.
16 Every single blessed word will be
17 broadcast, web cast. That is correct.
18 Copies will be made available to every
19 official. Shirley Huntley Disabilities
20 Committee, Joe Addabo, a proven man who
21 has proven as Councilman. He has got
22 the job done. Michelle Titus, also.
23 When she puts her glasses on, she will
24 ask you tough questions. Thank you.

25 MS. LEBOW: Good afternoon. My

1 May 10, 2012
2 name is Michelle Lebow, and I'm a
3 laboratory worker at Peninsula for 41
4 years. We all know the Department of
5 Health used the lab to close the
6 hospital because of the Berger
7 Commission Report. It was stated 400
8 beds are needed, and the peninsula now
9 has 257 beds. There are 133,000 people
10 on the peninsula, plus the extra beach
11 traffic, and a bridge that is now under
12 construction for repair. I am sure
13 since 2006, the population and the
14 buildings are still rising. Yes, the
15 lab had its citations since 2006, 2008
16 and 2010. Then Revival took over.
17 Eight inspectors came in, unheard of.
18 No reinspections to see if corrective
19 actions were taken, or in progress, but
20 that was okay. Mind you, it was always
21 the same inspector that did the
22 inspection. We pulled in January 100
23 percent on the proficiency. How bad
24 could we have been? Why, I ask? We
25 know why. You never wanted us to

1 May 10, 2012
2 survive. I really care about this
3 hospital. If I am wrong, prove it.
4 Keep the hospital open. Listen to the
5 people, listen to the suggestions, be
6 open minded, but I think you came in
7 with an agenda. Your agenda when you
8 brought all those people in and shut us
9 down in one day, and didn't give us the
10 common, decent, human courtesy that we
11 deserved to turn around and reinspect
12 us. We were 75 to 80 percent there two
13 weeks before you closed us. You wanted
14 us down, you shut us down. Watch
15 yourselves. I hope that you are happy
16 that there is going to be blood going
17 to be on your hands. It won't be on
18 mine.

19 MR. BERGER: Commissioner and
20 honored guests, my name is Richard
21 Berger, and I am a semi retired
22 emergency medical technician who has
23 served on ambulances within the
24 communities comprising the Rockaway
25 peninsula and Broad Channel for 38

1 May 10, 2012
2 years. I am here to address the
3 catastrophe of the closing of the
4 Peninsula Hospital Center, and the
5 impact on both the region and the Saint
6 John's Episcopal Hospital, currently
7 the only hospital serving the region.
8 Outside of the Rockaways and Broad
9 Channel, in the rest of the city, it is
10 a given that nobody is usually no more
11 than 15 minutes travel time away from a
12 hospital's emergency room, or perhaps
13 45 minutes from a specialty ER such as
14 a trauma or burn center.
15 The problem then becomes the wait to be
16 seen. If I understand correctly, there
17 was a survey some years ago which
18 concluded that we didn't have enough
19 population to support the need for two
20 hospitals. But at the same time,
21 neither one of the two could handle the
22 case load alone. With the closing of
23 the Peninsula Hospital Center, the
24 Saint John's Episcopal Hospital is
25 being overwhelmed. The population of

1 May 10, 2012

2 the Rockaways and Broad Channel is, per

3 the figures I have been given, roughly

4 120,000 people. We are both an aging

5 population, and with the continued

6 building of the Auburn by the Sea

7 community, a growing one. In 1975, for

8 my count from a handout from a private,

9 non 911 ambulance service provider that

10 I was then working for, roughly a third

11 of nursing homes and extended care

12 facilities in the city, outside of the

13 hospitals, were in Queens County, and

14 half of them were here in Rockaway. It

15 took an act of the State Legislature

16 and legislation to halt the

17 construction of more facilities as we

18 were declared to be in an impacted

19 area.

20 We are also isolated. We are, after

21 all, on a peninsula, with basically

22 only four ways out via bridges to

23 Brooklyn, Staten Island and Nassau

24 County. In 1993, during the

25 Northeaster, flood waters caused shut

1 May 10, 2012
2 down of all roadways into and out of
3 the Rockaways and Broad Channel. When
4 the Marine Parkway and Cross Bay
5 Bridges were shut down to traffic on
6 September 11, 2001, the backlog of
7 traffic going inland through Nassau
8 County was so bad, it took over a half
9 hour for some vehicles to move less
10 than 50 feet. I know because I was in
11 one of those private vehicles. If
12 there is no place to move to get out of
13 the way, nobody can move out of the way
14 of any emergency vehicle attempting to
15 proceed along the road under an
16 emergency lights and siren response.
17 Emergency rooms can and do get
18 backlogged with people asking for
19 medical help. There are nice people
20 who don't have a primary care
21 physician. Instead, they have an
22 emergency room to go to.
23 In the normal times of temperature
24 variations in the spring and fall, both
25 of the hospitals we previously had on

1 May 10, 2012

2 our beach can get crowded. Under state

3 law, anyone who is presented at an

4 emergency room asking for aid must

5 receive it. The hospitals can ask for

6 category diversion or total diversion

7 due to temporary lack of beds or

8 specific equipment used in patient

9 treatment. The local ambulance service

10 providers usually will divert to the

11 next nearest hospital, except when the

12 patient is in extremis, which is when

13 the patient might not make it to that

14 next emergency hospital. In all cases,

15 diversions are a courtesy extended to,

16 not a right of the hospitals asking for

17 the diversion. All EMT and paramedic

18 training programs will tell you in the

19 event of a stroke that time is brain

20 loss.

21 In cardiac pulmonary resuscitation, the

22 time taught us is after 10 minutes

23 without blood flow, brain cells start

24 to die, irreparably. Even with the

25 best skill, EMTs and paramedics

1 May 10, 2012
2 bringing the emergency room to the
3 patients, some cases need the
4 definitive care that can only come from
5 the local ER with machinery and
6 medicines that cannot be carried in the
7 ambulance. An ambulance crew has to
8 wait for an examining bed in the ER to
9 open. If multiple ambulances are
10 waiting for a bed, consider people who
11 just walk or drive to the ER to be
12 seen. They won't know until they
13 arrive that care might be temporarily
14 quicker going to a more distant
15 hospital.
16 In addition to heavy usage of the Saint
17 John's Episcopal Hospital on a regular
18 day, we have the possibility of an MCI
19 or multiple casualty incident. By
20 definition, an MCI can be directed when
21 an incident generates or might generate
22 five or more patients. This can range
23 from an overturned mini van with five
24 people aboard to a repeat of the
25 American Airlines Flight 587 crash in

1 May 10, 2012

2 the Belle Harbor section, which had 265
3 fatalities.

4 MR. MARRERO: Sir, please wrap up.

5 MR. SCHUBERT: I am almost done.
6 Or the Golden Venture which had 310
7 people. In conclusion, for an isolated
8 area as served by the closed Peninsula
9 Hospital Center and the Saint John's
10 Episcopal Hospital due to patient case
11 loads, it puts all of us in the
12 combined hospital catchment area at too
13 high a risk of delayed emergency room
14 care than should be considered
15 acceptable.

16 MR. MARRERO: Thank you, sir.

17 MS. LARKIN: Good afternoon. My
18 name is Barbara Larkin. I am the past
19 president of the Belle Harbor Property
20 Owners Association, Vice President of
21 Queens Civic Congress. I was on the
22 Advisory Board of Peninsula Hospital,
23 and I taught in PS 114, PS 42, Saint
24 Francis, a combination of over 35
25 years. But I speak as an individual

1 May 10, 2012
2 this afternoon.
3 First of all, I commend all the
4 individuals who have the courage to
5 come out and speak their minds today.
6 Because of all the problems that we
7 have had in Rockaway, sometimes we have
8 disagreed over different things, but I
9 can say today from Breezy Point through
10 Bays Water, we can all agree that this
11 is probably the largest problem we have
12 ever had. I would also like to say I
13 grew up in Brooklyn, but was very happy
14 to eventually come to Rockaway with my
15 parents in 1965, married my husband and
16 teach in a neighborhood school. That
17 said, I lived with my mother-in-law
18 since the day I was married. On a
19 Saturday afternoon, and thank God it
20 was a Saturday afternoon, my husband
21 and I were putting up the Christmas
22 tree, and she had pains in her chest.
23 We picked her up, we put her in the
24 car, we rushed her to Peninsula
25 Hospital. They told us if we hadn't

1 May 10, 2012
2 gotten her there then, she would have
3 died. She was there for three weeks.
4 They wanted to release her on Christmas
5 Eve day. We didn't like the way she
6 looked. We refused to take her home.
7 She had another heart attack that
8 evening. She was in the hospital for
9 another couple of weeks. A few years
10 later, my dad was on 116th Street, and
11 had a fainting spell. Thank God
12 someone found my phone number in his
13 pocket. They called me. They put him
14 in an ambulance with me. We got him
15 down to Peninsula Hospital, and one of
16 the wonderful nurses got his blood
17 sugar up from 14 to where ever it
18 needed to be, and saved his life. Two
19 hours ago, I was with my mother, who is
20 91 at Peninsula Hospital picking up her
21 records. She cried. It is a sad day
22 in Rockaway for Vincencia Becker, Nanny
23 Toots, the grandmother of Rockaway, to
24 have to go to Peninsula to pick up all
25 of her records. Mine weren't ready, so

1 May 10, 2012
2 I am going another day.
3 I would like to implore the elected
4 officials, whom I know very, very well,
5 and I know who do a very, very fine
6 job, to know this is our biggest
7 problem. Since many people are working
8 at this time, I implore them to have an
9 on line petition so everybody in
10 Rockaway and of Queens, indeed the
11 state could present to our Governor,
12 who I know is a fine man, I don't know
13 him personally. As a graduate of Saint
14 John's University, I have met his dad,
15 and I had my picture taken with his
16 mother. I understand he is a
17 wonderful, wonderful governor. I don't
18 think he realizes this problem. I know
19 he is very busy. I didn't expect him
20 to be here today, and I know if our
21 elected officials could get together
22 and get this on line petition going and
23 present it to our Governor, I know, I
24 am confident he will help solve the
25 problem for all of Rockaway. Thank you

1 May 10, 2012
2 for your time.

3 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Before 16
4 through 20, I believe Senator Smith,
5 you wanted to say a few words.

6 SENATOR SMITH: Thank you very
7 much, Commissioner Shah for being here,
8 Commissioner Clancy, Commissioner Cook,
9 Associate Commissioner Johnson.
10 Commissioner, I am sure you are
11 familiar with the phrase when one door
12 closes, another one opens. My concern
13 today is when you close the door of
14 Peninsula, you are opening the door of
15 death to the Rockaways.
16 I think it is important, and I know you
17 have heard testimony from a lot of the
18 residents here. But you really need to
19 understand the Rockaways, you need to
20 understand the demographics of the
21 Rockaways, you need to understand this
22 is a community that is growing. You
23 have a neighborhood, Auburn by the Sea,
24 which is growing, bringing more than
25 10,000 people out here. We just put

1 May 10, 2012

2 close to \$15 million into all of the

3 trains that are running along the A

4 line. You have the YMCA that is being

5 built, a school is being built.

6 Everything that an urban renewal area

7 gets is happening, except for the

8 reverse of the medical facility. The

9 concern that I have, and I have had a

10 meeting with these individuals here, we

11 have been on the phone. It has been

12 very aggressive, very testy, and I did

13 what I could. The best that I could to

14 try to help them understand this

15 process. The problem that I have, and

16 I have been on the phone with yourself.

17 I have been on the phone with the

18 trustee, I have been on the phone with

19 the Governor, with the Governor's

20 office.

21 Here is my challenge. The challenge to

22 us was find someone that could possibly

23 give up the money or the resources to

24 have the lab retested or reopened. We

25 did that. That was rejected. They put

1 May 10, 2012
2 up cash, and then were told no. Then
3 they said find somebody else to come in
4 and buy the hospital to open it. We
5 did that with People's Choice. You
6 said no. Then it was asked perhaps if
7 you talk to the creditors, the biggest
8 one being 1199, perhaps we could work
9 it out with them. We talked to 1199,
10 and all they said to us was after
11 communicating with the Health
12 Department, you said no. The problem
13 is every time there was a solution that
14 we were asked to come up with, after we
15 came up with a solution, there was
16 always a no. That is why you are
17 hearing the public here saying they
18 think there was a preconceived
19 condition to close this hospital.
20 Commissioner, we are appealing to your
21 heart. I know your background. I know
22 where you have come from. You are an
23 honorable individual. You have done
24 tremendous work in the health field.
25 When we closed down Mary Immaculate

1 May 10, 2012
2 Hospital, Jamaica Hospital, Queens
3 Hospital was there to take the
4 pressure. When you closed down Saint
5 John's, you had Booth to take the
6 pressure. When they closed down Saint
7 Vincent's, you have got hospitals in
8 Manhattan to take the pressure. You
9 closed down Peninsula Hospital. Saint
10 John's cannot take the pressure. You
11 have Senator Huntley here, you have
12 Assemblyman Goldfeder here, you have
13 Addabo here. You heard about Turner,
14 you heard about Sanders. You heard
15 about Michelle Titus. You have every
16 single elected official, the Borough
17 President's office, all here. We are
18 all here. The Rockaway Peninsula is
19 unique.
20 Commissioner, you have to take the time
21 to understand us, understand the
22 peninsula. If something goes wrong on
23 this island, on this peninsula, if
24 something happens with the bridge, and
25 it has happened, you cannot get across,

1 May 10, 2012
2 that is serious. You cannot send
3 everybody to Saint John's. Saint
4 John's cannot handle what they have
5 now. They could not handle what
6 Peninsula had when they were here. Now
7 you have more people moving out here.
8 Commissioner, I am begging you, I am
9 pleading with you, please don't do
10 this. You have to give us a full
11 fledged hospital. I will say to you, I
12 will make this commitment to you on the
13 record. Whatever that I can do as one
14 of the Senators of the 63, whatever I
15 need to do, any resources that are
16 coming my way through the Governor,
17 through the Senate, anything that I can
18 do, I will do. As they are diverting
19 patients off, I will divert any
20 resources, any dollars that I get for
21 this hospital to be put back.
22 Commissioner, please, that is all I am
23 asking, please. I know you are put
24 sometimes in a very untenable
25 situation. I understand the challenge

1 May 10, 2012
2 that you have. We have talked often.
3 This particular situation is unique.
4 They took care of Brookdale. Take care
5 of Peninsula. You cannot let this
6 close.

7 COMMISSIONER SHAH: Thank you so
8 much for your testimony. I admire the
9 courage of everyone who is here, who is
10 speaking on behalf of the needs of this
11 community. We hear you loud and clear.
12 We are looking to find ways to make
13 this work. The reality is we have gone
14 far, and we have a lot of work to do.
15 We know what your needs are in terms of
16 primary care, in terms of acute care,
17 and there is work being done as we
18 speak on increasing the capacity of
19 both. I am happy to listen to you.

20 SENATOR SMITH: Let me just say
21 this to you, please. The Commissioner
22 is here. If we are going to get any
23 answers, you have got to listen. I
24 know you are pissed off. I am pissed
25 off too, but we have got him here now.

1 May 10, 2012

2 Let's at least hear what he has to say.
3 It will be on the record, and we will
4 be able to move forward from here, but
5 you cannot not let him speak. This is
6 the gentleman that runs the Health
7 Department. He is the one that tells
8 the Governor what to do, how to do it.
9 You have got to hear what he has got to
10 say.

11 COMMISSIONER SHAH: So our
12 commitment to you, to everyone in this
13 room, to everyone on this peninsula, is
14 to figure out how to best meet the
15 needs as we understand them, and we
16 will work very closely with you, with
17 the elected officials, with the
18 advocates, with the citizens of this
19 area, to figure out what your needs are
20 and how to get them. I think that for
21 too long, this community has not gotten
22 what it deserves in terms of care. We
23 will try to figure out what your needs
24 are and work with you to get them. I
25 can't say that I have all the answers.

1 May 10, 2012

2 I wish I did. I wish there was a
3 silver bullet that said do this one
4 thing and it will fix all the problems.
5 It is not that easy. I wish it were,
6 because then we would do it if the
7 answer were that easy. The reality is
8 there are extreme needs for this
9 community, and our job is to figure out
10 how best to meet those needs in the
11 term and in the long term. So that is
12 my commitment back to you.

13 SENATOR HUNTLEY: I would just
14 like to say I am here to support you.
15 I lived through the closing of Mary
16 Immaculate Hospital. We marched, we
17 screamed, we yelled, we fought on the
18 ground. They closed it. I met with
19 the Governor on Tuesday to talk about
20 Peninsula. I will be meeting again
21 with him next week. But just be sure.
22 Don't believe everything that you hear,
23 because I don't. I am being very
24 honest. I don't believe everything I
25 hear. I don't know why in the

1 May 10, 2012
2 communities, normally the poorer
3 communities or the lower middle class,
4 but not the wealthy, they close
5 hospitals. We lost three hospitals in
6 Queens, the other part of Queens. Now
7 we are losing this one. That is four.
8 Other hospitals survive. Why? Did you
9 ever think about it? Why did they
10 survive? The state has money to do
11 whatever the hell they want to do.
12 Okay. They have money. As far as when
13 they went in for the lab, the state
14 could pay for that. We pay for
15 nonsense. We pay for stuff that is not
16 even important. We spent more money on
17 paper than we do on hospitals, okay.
18 So I will be working with you. We are
19 not going to just let this go away. We
20 are going to open this hospital.

21 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Thank you.
22 16 through 23. I just want to make an
23 announcement that we have signers here
24 if anybody who is in need of that,
25 please indicate to us if you are in

1 May 10, 2012
2 need of sign language interpretation.
3 Thank you.

4 MS. STERN: Hi, I am Leona
5 Stern. I have been living out here
6 since I was six weeks old, and. This
7 is my able assistant. I am able to
8 walk down this aisle without assistance
9 even though everybody tried to help me,
10 because of the expertise of the staff
11 of this hospital. I fell and my knees
12 just disintegrated, and my leg
13 disintegrated. I was in a coma for two
14 weeks, and they got me up here. So
15 thank you. Not to make light of this
16 discussion and that meeting, but
17 because I have been in this hospital so
18 many times, I think most of the people
19 in this audience have seen me naked at
20 one time or another, and I am grateful.
21 Two times in my life, I have met with
22 death, seriously met with death, and
23 they patched me up and I am here. If
24 you are going to take away this
25 hospital from us, the reason I'm here

1 May 10, 2012

2 is because I was close enough to the
3 hospital, and you have a wonderful
4 staff. If there were plenty of kids
5 bleeding on the beach, you wouldn't
6 think of closing this hospital so
7 quickly. But you don't know what it
8 looks like when a kid slices their leg
9 on the beach, among other things. We
10 didn't talk mostly about kids with
11 asthma, not being able to get to the
12 hospital fast enough. We really don't
13 know why you closed the hospital. We
14 need an answer. Thank you.

15 MR. SALMON: Tough act to
16 follow. I'm Peter Salmon, past
17 president of the Neponset Property
18 Owners Association. I would like to say
19 that a lot of people think that the
20 people on the west end just are
21 concerned with the emergency room.
22 That is not a fact. I had two major
23 operations at Peninsula, and extended
24 care there, stays there. And I have
25 had ambulatory surgeries a few times

1 May 10, 2012
2 there. I have used it, my wife uses
3 it, and many of my neighbors do. And
4 we find that it is very important that
5 the hospital be there. Not only do we
6 use it, but the residents who live
7 within walking distance of Peninsula
8 really are those that are going to
9 suffer going forward. Many of them do
10 not have automobiles. They could walk
11 there from the Ocean Bay houses, Ocean
12 Village, the 39th Street houses. They
13 could walk to Peninsula. Now if they
14 have something, they can't walk there
15 any more. So they have to go and try
16 to get an ambulance to take them
17 somewhere, or they don't get the care
18 they need, and it gets worse they then
19 could end up dying from neglect because
20 they were not able to get to the
21 emergency room in Peninsula. So it is
22 more than just the ambulances that are
23 being diverted. The people are being
24 diverted, and the demand for ambulances
25 to take people to the hospital has

1 May 10, 2012
2 increased. So you will have more
3 ambulance runs now than you had before
4 the closing. Also, we are coming into
5 the summer season, and this is
6 critical, as you have heard many of our
7 speakers say. That it is really a
8 disgrace that the state did not act
9 properly. You are now helping the two
10 biggest creditors in the bankruptcy
11 court.

12 An inefficient Med Systems, who
13 improperly ran the place, did not make
14 billing properly, they did not get the
15 funds in on a timely basis. That
16 created a financial thing. You have a
17 union who did not care about its
18 workers, was more worried about getting
19 their almighty dollar, and you played
20 right into their hands. Who in the
21 Department of Health makes the decision
22 to put everybody's lives at risk on
23 this peninsula so that two losers,
24 people who have failed to do their job,
25 and support their own people, and you

1 May 10, 2012

2 turn around and you reward them. You
3 also put, two of the diversion
4 hospitals are ones that are run by Med
5 Systems; Brookdale and Jamaica. So you
6 put more money into their pockets
7 because of the diversions. So this is
8 not acceptable. Our elected officials
9 should really get after you, because
10 there is more to it than we have ever
11 been told. It is not just the health
12 issue. It is the almighty dollar
13 issue. So act properly, do your job,
14 save lives and give us a hospital that
15 serves the needs of the people on the
16 peninsula.

17 MS. THOMPSON: Commissioner
18 Johnson, Commissioner Cook,
19 Commissioner Clancy, I see Commissioner
20 Shah is missing, but I guess he is
21 coming back. Brothers and sisters of
22 this community, my name is Claire
23 Thompson, and I am a registered nurse,
24 first of all. I am also vice-president
25 of 1199 SEIU, United Health Care

1 May 10, 2012
2 Workers, and I am here to give
3 testimony. 1199, United Health Care
4 Workers, represents more than 600
5 hospital care givers who were employed
6 at Peninsula Hospital, many of whom not
7 on work at the southeast Queens
8 hospital, but also make their homes in
9 the community. In fact, I lived and
10 worked in this community, and my
11 relatives, my very close relatives are
12 still here, numerous of my relatives, a
13 number of my relatives are still here.
14 We are deeply disappointed that
15 Peninsula Hospital has closed its
16 doors, after tremendous effort by many
17 to keep it open. It has also been the
18 position of our union that the closure
19 of another acute care facility in
20 Queens is unacceptable, and more so
21 when it happens in Far Rockaway. For
22 over a year, 1199 SEIU has exhausted
23 every possibility to save the hospital
24 from closure, including drawing
25 attention to this dire fiscal situation

1 May 10, 2012
2 in May of 2011 when we called a
3 political breakfast at the dinner up
4 there in the Rockaways, early one
5 morning, to emphasize this crisis.
6 Even when the hospital defaulted the
7 workers benefit fund, every attempt was
8 made to work with the hospital too
9 resolve its arrears. They were granted
10 numerous extensions and latitude to
11 find a solution. We continued to raise
12 the issue for months in an attempt to
13 stave off the crisis, and to support
14 the initiative taken by Revival Home
15 Health Care. Unfortunately, we were
16 among those who were misled by the
17 investors and their management. Access
18 to quality health care in the Rockaways
19 continues to be our priority.
20 It is extremely important that the
21 services are maintained on Rockaway
22 Peninsula, and we are working with the
23 trustee, the State Department of
24 Health, the Governor to explore all
25 options for the repurposing of the

1 May 10, 2012
2 Peninsula site. Our approach to
3 meeting the health care needs in the
4 Rockaway community is two fold. First,
5 1199 SEIU is in favor of building a new
6 state of the art facility in the
7 Rockaway peninsula as recommended by
8 the Berger Commission some time back.
9 This new facility should be under the
10 direction of Saint John's Episcopal
11 Hospital as an affiliate of a larger
12 health care system. Such as for
13 example the North Shore LIJ. Within
14 three to four years, that facility can
15 efficiently and effectively serve the
16 Rockaway community. We remain
17 supportive of the effort to find new
18 outside bidders to reopen the hospital
19 despite impediments. There are no
20 current bidders who are willing to take
21 the risk, and the trustee will make the
22 decision at an auction in the next six
23 to seven weeks. In any case, health
24 care services at the repurposed
25 Peninsula must include but not limited

1 May 10, 2012

2 to an emergency room, an ambulatory
3 care service, surgery unit, a
4 psychiatric unit, an emergency service
5 to treat psychiatric patients.
6 Furthermore, the Joseph P. Addabo
7 Family Health Center, one of the
8 leading providers of preventative and
9 comprehensive primary health care in
10 New York should be involved in
11 providing extended ambulatory services.
12 The repurposing of Peninsula Hospital
13 is a crucial community investment.

14 MR. MARRERO: Please wrap up.

15 MS. THOMPSON: If done
16 appropriately, it will provide critical
17 services, and save hundreds of health
18 care jobs. In the past few months, we
19 have worked to preserve as many jobs as
20 possible for our members. Many have
21 been hired by Saint John's Episcopal.

22 MR. MARRERO: Could you please
23 wrap it up.

24 MS. THOMPSON: I will try. I am
25 at the end, Commissioner. When

1 May 10, 2012
2 configuring the most resourceful and
3 responsible manner for a transformed
4 Peninsula, the former employees must
5 have priority status. In the mean
6 time, they are protected by 1199 job
7 security fund, which provides mandatory
8 placement, training and health care
9 benefits.

10 MR. MARRERO: Thank you, ma'am.
11 Thank you for your comments. Thank
12 you.

13 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you. We
14 have a speaker on the floor.

15 MS. REDWICK: My name is Phyllis
16 Redwick. I live in Bays Water. I am
17 an ordinary citizen. My husband and I
18 had occasion to use Saint Johns in the
19 last I would say couple of months. We
20 were very well treated. We were very
21 lucky. Because while we were being
22 taken care of at different times,
23 ambulances and their drivers were being
24 turned away because Saint John's
25 Emergency Room simply could not take

1 May 10, 2012
2 them, patients were practically, and I
3 am exaggerating, but not too much, they
4 were practically hanging from the
5 walls. There was no room for them. I
6 am glad that you came today to Far
7 Rockaway, and Rockaway because you
8 heard about Breezy Point, you heard
9 mention of Bays Water. From Bays Water
10 to Breezy Point, we have a beautiful
11 community. It is so beautiful that we
12 invite you to come and buy one of the
13 homes or the condos or the coops that
14 are available. I can tell you about
15 the bridges. All the bridges go up.
16 You cannot get to Nassau because the
17 bridge goes up every hour or so, with
18 boats and ships coming through. You
19 know that already. But you don't know
20 how wonderful it is to live here. I
21 think you should have the opportunity.
22 Unfortunately, at the same time you
23 will have the opportunity to enjoy
24 every single part of this peninsula,
25 you will also have the opportunity to

1 May 10, 2012

2 join with us in having difficulty in

3 getting to a hospital. That is the sad

4 part of the whole thing.

5 I have two more concerns. One is hope.

6 One is hope that you will listen to us

7 and follow through. I don't care if

8 you build a big, big one or open up

9 Peninsula. I hope you open up

10 Peninsula first. But my second concern

11 is that you will be like the New York

12 Board of Standards and Appeals. The

13 New York Board of Standards and Appeals

14 listens to communities speak to protect

15 themselves and their communities from

16 overdeveloping. But the Board of

17 Standards and Appeals nods their heads

18 and says no, sir, no, ma'am, we don't

19 care, we do what we want.

20 My fervent hope is that you are not

21 like the Board of Standards and

22 Appeals. My other comment is about

23 Malcolm Smith. When we needed to have

24 hope to develop our community and down

25 zone it, he was there. He was there

1 May 10, 2012
2 for every single meeting, every single
3 possibility. I know that whatever he
4 said today was so. He will be there,
5 everywhere to help us turn this around.
6 So I thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: We have
8 the 20th speaker. Do we have number or
9 was that 20? We are going to call
10 numbers 21 through 25, but I believe I
11 would like to recognize Assemblywoman
12 who might want to say a few words. Is
13 that true? Then I know we have a
14 representative of Congressman Turner,
15 who has asked to say a few words. So
16 Bob, do you want to come up, please.
17 Then we will start with 21 through 25.
18 Thank you.

19 ASSEMBLYWOMAN TITUS: I am
20 Assemblywoman Michelle Titus, and I
21 represent the 31st Assembly District,
22 which includes Far Rockaway and Auburn.
23 I thank the Department of Health for
24 holding this public hearing here in my
25 community, and listening to the actual

1 May 10, 2012
2 residents impacted by the recent
3 closing of Peninsula Hospital here in
4 the Rockaways. Peninsula Hospital has
5 served this community for over a
6 century. It was an integral part of
7 the community that provided a center
8 health care and employment for over
9 1,000 families. I have to say two
10 years ago when I co-sponsored the
11 legislation that was spearheaded by
12 Assemblyman Roy Lansman in my house and
13 Senator Huntley in the Senate, that
14 created the law that allows you to hold
15 these public hearings after a hospital
16 closure. It was a result of at that
17 time the onslaught that we had faced
18 here in Queens. It was right after
19 Mary Immaculate had closed and how the
20 other hospitals had to try, try with
21 their best, to incorporate that new
22 flow of patients.
23 I am saddened, however, today stand
24 here after that law was implemented in
25 my own community, talking about

1 May 10, 2012
2 Peninsula Hospital. It was never
3 thought of two years ago that we would
4 be here in the Rockaways dealing with
5 this. We were actually I want to say
6 having several conversations at the
7 Borough President's office with regards
8 to how we can have state of the art
9 health care here in the Rockaway after
10 the Berger Commission provided their
11 report. As you heard and you will hear
12 from the testimony, the Borough of
13 Queens has distinguishing
14 characteristics which would make a
15 hospital closing just unfathomable. It
16 is not reasonable nor is it rational to
17 deny the significant population of
18 elderly residents, cancer sufferers,
19 job seekers and new residents access to
20 health care facilities.
21 We have already endured seven
22 consecutive years of budget cuts, the
23 increasing cost of medical equipment
24 and insurance, which is making it
25 difficult for our hospitals to address

1 May 10, 2012
2 the needs of our community. In
3 comparing resources among other
4 boroughs, Queens has only 1.4 hospital
5 beds per 1,000, whereas other boroughs
6 enjoy about 7.1 beds per 1,000
7 residents. The fact that the amount of
8 certified beds in our region is
9 significantly less than other boroughs
10 is an inconsistency that needs to be
11 addressed. However, in your
12 examination of my particular district,
13 you will find that there are specific
14 concerns which constitute the necessity
15 of Peninsula Hospital. In Far Rockaway
16 alone, there are over 300 units of
17 housing available for new residents
18 attracted to the economic boom which we
19 are experiencing. The population is
20 projected to be increased about 20,000
21 residents within the next five years.
22 A huge portion of my represented
23 district is on the peninsula, and
24 remains isolated from options of
25 emergency or routine health care

1 May 10, 2012
2 facilities. In light of our population
3 and location, it is clear that our
4 community requires the presence of a
5 hospital more than ever before. In
6 addition, a significant portion of the
7 population is aging. There are over
8 400,000 persons aged 60 and older, and
9 about 40,000 persons aged 85 and older.
10 Similarly, more than 400,000 persons
11 are surviving without any form of
12 health insurance. Citizens deserve to
13 be served in their own communities.
14 Peninsula Hospital also served as one
15 of the largest employers for our
16 residents.
17 Long time community residents, I have
18 with me Dr. Ed Williams right here.
19 Staff and volunteers who all deeply are
20 invested in caring for residents, and
21 assisting the medical society force to
22 find other professions. Furthermore, I
23 must emphasize that Peninsula Hospital
24 is the only health care facility in the
25 region that had a radiation oncology

1 May 10, 2012
2 department. The rate of cancer is
3 increasing on the peninsula. We cannot
4 force cancer patients to other boroughs
5 to receive treatment services. I
6 recommend that we focus on stabilizing
7 our hospitals and nursing home
8 communities. Rockaway needs a full
9 service hospital. I strongly recommend
10 a full service hospital with
11 preventative services to combat the
12 medical disparities that we are also
13 seeing in our communities. Peninsula
14 Hospital is a life saver to many of my
15 constituents because it provides jobs,
16 services for the elderly, and those
17 battling cancer. We cannot live with
18 this closure. It is our job to resist
19 undermining the perversion of health
20 care. The viability of our community
21 requires that such services be
22 available. Once again, I thank you for
23 your consideration.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: If I would have
25 known that I was going to be at a

1 May 10, 2012
2 circus, I would have waited until
3 Barnum and Bailey got in next month.
4 Because that is just what this is. Let
5 me just say first of all, my name is
6 Dr. Edward Williams, and I am the
7 president of the Far Rockaway NAACP.
8 It is a shame that the Commissioner
9 left, because I really would like for
10 him to hear what I have to say. I have
11 got two things to say. The question of
12 the integrity of the process that was
13 implemented for your department to
14 close Peninsula Hospital, number one,
15 and number two is a policy, is a
16 procedure, is it ethical, is it legal
17 to have your team, the Department of
18 Health team assigned to close
19 Peninsula, have discussions with the
20 CEO, the former president of the board,
21 the other organization that is
22 responsible for the financial problems
23 of tis hospital, Medisys, to be
24 directed by his staff on ways in which
25 to close that hospital?

1 May 10, 2012

2 I am throwing this to all my electeds.
3 That is what you need to investigate.
4 You need to find out how legal and
5 ethnical it is for the Department of
6 Health's team to have conversations
7 with the administration of that closing
8 hospital, and giving them guidelines
9 and instructions on how to accelerate
10 closing the hospital. Then you come
11 back to this community and justify it
12 with what you claim is supposed to be
13 realistic views of why you should be
14 closing this hospital. It's criminal
15 what went down. I was at that hospital
16 every day.

17 By the way, I'm standing up here and
18 I'm breathing and I'm walking because
19 of the professional people that are
20 sitting here without a job today and
21 those who are not here today. You
22 decided to walk in there and close that
23 hospital down within the blink of an
24 eye. I was there every day with
25 resources poured into that hospital to

1 May 10, 2012

2 correct it. You waited until a minute
3 before the end of the day to decide
4 that you were going to come in there
5 and close that hospital. I've got to
6 tell you this here, and I don't care
7 what nobody says. At the end of the
8 day, they're going to find out that the
9 process and whatever was behind your
10 reasoning for doing it was both
11 unethical, illegal and a shame. If the
12 Governor don't look into your behavior,
13 then that's who we should hold
14 accountable too, because you were wrong
15 in doing it.

16 MS. GLASGOW: Wonderful. I am
17 just happy to follow my president,
18 president of the Far Rockaway NAACP.
19 My name is Yvette Glasgow, and I served
20 as former president years ago when
21 things were running smoothly. But
22 thank God for him now today. I just
23 want to say when I moved to the
24 Rockaways about 50 years ago, I settled
25 in the Edgemere Houses right in front

1 May 10, 2012
2 of Peninsula Hospital, and that was
3 such an asset. Here I am in case of an
4 emergency, I am right here in front of
5 the hospital. I can walk across.
6 Somebody said something about walkers.
7 But my point is I have watched how the
8 citizens of this community need that
9 hospital. Gentlemen, please see what
10 you can do. We have made appeals over
11 and over. I am so proud of my elected
12 officials, because when I have a hand
13 in getting them re-elected, that's what
14 it's all about, because of their good
15 works. I don't mind going that extra
16 step to see that they continue to serve
17 us. I am not a medical health person.
18 I am an educator, so I work in the
19 schools around here, and I know most of
20 the children. But look around this
21 room. Look at the ages here. We need
22 health facilities. I would say the
23 average age here is 60, 65 or
24 something. I am going to put it that
25 way, retirement age, anyhow. We want

1 May 10, 2012

2 to be able to live out our future
3 years in relatively good health. I'm
4 in relatively good health, and I'm 75.
5 What can I tell you? I want to be able
6 to walk into Peninsula Hospital, not
7 have to be carried in and brought
8 across the bridge that might be up and
9 all of that. Let me be able to get to
10 Peninsula Hospital. Thank you again.

11 MR. CAPANO: Thank you,
12 Mr. Clancy and the Department of Health
13 staff for being here. My name is Bob
14 Capano. I am the district director for
15 Congressman Bob Turner, who is in
16 Washington today. As the member of
17 Congress for this district, as a
18 resident of the Rockaways himself,
19 Congressman Turner is deeply disturbed
20 by the closure of a hospital so
21 important to this community's well
22 being. We have to remember that when
23 Peninsula was founded 104 years ago, in
24 1908, the nearest hospital was in Long
25 Island City, a two hour train ride

1 May 10, 2012
2 away. Back then, this community came
3 together in an incredible manner to
4 organize and fund the construction of
5 Peninsula. Everyone from local
6 business leaders to trade unions to
7 summer residents donated their time,
8 money and resources to ensure the
9 creation and the continued success of
10 this hospital. Since then, it has
11 provided essential life saving services
12 to this ever expanding population.
13 Since the announcement was made that
14 Peninsula would be closed, we have seen
15 this same solidarity from our
16 residents, similar to that seen 104
17 years ago. You just have to look
18 around this room today. You can see
19 this is an issue that transcends
20 political party affiliations. You see
21 Republicans, you see Democrats, you see
22 Independents, you see Conservatives,
23 you see Green Party and everybody in
24 between. You see every racial,
25 religious and ethnic group in this room

1 May 10, 2012

2 representing the great diversity of

3 Queens. All of us who depend on this

4 hospital.

5 We understand, we all understand that

6 the closure of an institution that has

7 served us over a century will devastate

8 this community, leaving only one

9 hospital, Saint John's. Already ,

10 Saint John's is showing signs of

11 strain. Numerous reports have arisen

12 of people requiring emergency care

13 being diverted from Saint John's due to

14 lack of capacity. Those who are turned

15 away now face at least a 25 to 30

16 minute ambulance ride to the nearest

17 hospital. That is under low traffic

18 conditions. In an emergency situation,

19 these extra minutes may well be the

20 determining factor between life and

21 death. This situation has created

22 without a doubt a health care crisis in

23 the Rockaways that will continue to

24 afflict our community until a solution

25 is reached. In making the decision to

1 May 10, 2012

2 close the hospital, the Department of

3 Health provided little advance warning

4 of their intentions, and did not

5 consider residents' concerns. In doing

6 so, they did not exhibit the

7 transparency we deserve on an issue of

8 such monumental importance to all of us

9 in this community.

10 Furthermore, the DOH seems to have

11 utterly failed to plan for alternative

12 means of addressing the very real

13 crisis Peninsula's closure has created.

14 This has left us desperately short of

15 life saving medical care in a community

16 whose population and health care needs

17 are only growing with time. Although

18 Congressmen Turner is grateful that

19 this public forum is being held,

20 something that we have been calling for

21 since the end of March, he is

22 disheartened at the fact that this

23 opportunity to solicit community input

24 was not made available before the

25 hospital's closure. Furthermore, we

1 May 10, 2012

2 had hoped that this hearing would take

3 place later in the day for more of our

4 hard working residents to attend.

5 Perhaps most significantly, our

6 comments will not be addressed during

7 this meeting. Instead, DOH will issue

8 a report within 60 days addressing our

9 community's questions. We may now be

10 forced to wait nearly three months

11 after the hospital's closure to receive

12 answers to all of our most pressing

13 questions. Clearly the process for

14 holding these hearings is flawed, and

15 Congressman Turner hopes there will be

16 a review by our State Legislature.

17 They should evaluate the audit in which

18 the closings and the hearings are

19 executed. It is important that the

20 public be committed to partake in

21 hearings before a hospital closure is

22 put into effect, and not after.

23 Congressman Turner strongly urges the

24 DOH to take swift and decisive action

25 to ensure that the full health care

1 May 10, 2012
2 needs of this great community are met.
3 Any other course of action that
4 promotes the status quo is absolutely
5 unacceptable, and will impose an
6 unbearable cost on the health care of
7 our community and Rockaways and Broad
8 Channel. Thank you very much.

9 MS. SULIK: Good afternoon,
10 everyone. My name is Liz Sulik. I am
11 the former director of External Affairs
12 at Peninsula Hospital. I appreciate
13 the opportunity to speak today, and I
14 can only hope that the voices that you
15 have heard here today the impassioned
16 pleas of those for whom health care has
17 been provided all these years will not
18 go unnoticed by you. From the
19 beginning of the PHC closure process,
20 the treatment of the Rockaway community
21 by the New York State Department of
22 Health, the Governor's office, and
23 indeed even the court appointed trustee
24 has been nothing short of utter and
25 complete contempt. Many of us as well

1 May 10, 2012
2 as our elected officials have been
3 requesting answers from the New York
4 State Department of Health for well
5 more than two months, concerning the
6 abrupt closure of Peninsula Hospital
7 Center. Certified letters to both the
8 Governor's office and to the New York
9 State Department of Health have gone
10 without response. Telephone calls and
11 requests for public meetings and
12 information have been brushed aside.
13 Even the law stating that the community
14 meeting must be held has been
15 disregarded.
16 All of this under a veil of secrecy and
17 vague, noncommittal responses. Yes,
18 the closure affects some 800 employees
19 at the hospital center who now must
20 find other jobs, or collect
21 unemployment. But without a doubt, the
22 consequences of such contempt go ever
23 so much further. They carry
24 consequences into a community that
25 serves the underserved, the elderly,

1 May 10, 2012
2 the ill, as well as the fact that you
3 have heard this many times before this
4 afternoon, an isolated population in
5 Queens County. They reach people who
6 are receiving life saving chemotherapy
7 treatments. They reach a people who
8 are in need of chronic disease
9 maintenance. They reach thousands of
10 people who depend upon emergency
11 treatment, and those dependent upon
12 routine and preventative health care
13 close to home. For the first time in
14 the 43 years I have lived in this
15 community, I have heard people talk
16 about being frightened because of the
17 lack of health care. This is
18 absolutely not meant to disparage Saint
19 John's or Addabo Health Care Center.
20 They are there for the community, to be
21 sure, but they do not and are not
22 equipped to handle the influx of
23 patients they are going to get
24 occasioned by the closure of the
25 hospital center. I believe people will

1 May 10, 2012
2 die, and I believe it will be because
3 of the result of a government in which
4 we, the people, have been asked to
5 place our trust. The New York State
6 DOH on its web site proudly
7 commemorated National Public Health
8 Week in April. The State Health
9 Commissioner, Dr. Shah, highlighted
10 recent public health achievements in
11 New York, and pledged to build on these
12 efforts to ensure all New Yorkers enjoy
13 optimal health. With all due respect,
14 this press release flies in the face of
15 the complete contempt that the New York
16 State Department of Health has shown to
17 this community. If the word committed
18 accurately describes the DOH's position
19 in general, then why not diligently
20 search out a solution. I have never
21 been a subscriber to conspiracy or
22 subversive theories.
23 My job at Peninsula Hospital as its
24 director was basically to disseminate
25 information. I have to say that in

1 May 10, 2012

2 August, I worked with Commissioner Cook
3 and the Department of Health during the
4 first closure process. During that
5 closure process, it was so emphasized
6 to get the message out to the community
7 and make sure that everybody knew so
8 that they could seek alternative health
9 care. That was not done this time.
10 This was done purely with utter and
11 complete contempt for the needs here in
12 the community. I urge you please to
13 consider everything that has been said
14 here today, to make sure that we can
15 continue with our health care here in
16 this community. Thank you.

17 MS. RADER: Hello. My name is
18 Laura Rader. Thank you for the
19 opportunity to speak today. I am a
20 certified hospice and palliative nurse.
21 I have worked at Peninsula for the past
22 25 years, the last four in an
23 outstanding 16 bed inpatient unit, the
24 Eisenstadt Hospice Unit. Hundreds of
25 commendations, cards, letters we have

1 May 10, 2012
2 received, and to the local paper only
3 validates the superb care and absolute
4 need for this unit. The word hospice
5 comes from ancient times, meaning a
6 place of shelter for travelers on a
7 difficult journey. We as professionals
8 are caring for patients on life's final
9 journey. Hospice is a specialty
10 program and our inpatient unit is
11 uniquely equipped to treat and manage
12 the often difficult needs and
13 circumstances of a patient with a life
14 threatening illness. I am going to be
15 working as a home care hospice nurse
16 out in the community. While most of
17 the patients are cared for in the
18 community, there does come a time when
19 they need an inpatient settings, but
20 symptoms are out of control.
21 Recently I have had several experiences
22 with patients in the homes needing our
23 unit, and there were no beds available.
24 One patient could not and would not go
25 to Melville, Long Island as the commute

1 May 10, 2012
2 would cause undue hardship on the
3 family. Another patient needed
4 inpatient care, and instead of coming
5 to our unit and bypassing the emergency
6 room, she had to spend two days on a
7 stretcher in Saint John's. Not the
8 most appropriate care or the best
9 quality care for someone dying of
10 cancer at the end of their life.
11 Hospice recognizes dying as a part of
12 the natural life cycle. It respects
13 the rights of the patient to live
14 fully, including the right to die with
15 dignity, to enjoy the highest possible
16 quality of life, and to have their
17 needs met in the environment of his or
18 her choice. The Eisenstadt Hospice
19 Unit in Peninsula provided the highest
20 quality care to hundreds of patients
21 and their families over the last four
22 years when they needed it most. Its
23 closing leaves a huge void in Rockaway
24 and the surrounding communities. Thank
25 you.

1 May 10, 2012

2 MR. RUDNICK: My name is Harvey
3 Rudnick. You have heard my wife, and I
4 can't really state more than that, that
5 she has imparted to you. My concern is
6 that this not a sham. This gentleman
7 walked out. I would assume he cleared
8 his calendar for the day so that he
9 could be here. He just walked away.
10 He told us he was going to be a nice
11 man, and he is going to look into it.
12 That is great, and you are taking
13 notes. I hope you will go back. I am
14 old enough to know that government
15 should work for us. However,
16 government doesn't work for us, and we
17 found that out many, many times. I
18 will ask our politicians to give us a
19 daily, almost weekly up date of what
20 goes on in your deliberations. Not 60
21 days from now, not 80 days from now,
22 but next week.
23 This is a very, very important thing
24 that you have heard. I can't tell you
25 any more of what these people -- please

1 May 10, 2012
2 look at me. Don't answer me back,
3 because we are going to get into
4 trouble. I don't really have much more
5 to say, and I want to thank you for
6 coming. I just hope that Mr. Smith,
7 our representative, really keeps your
8 feet to the fire, and gives us our
9 answers quickly, and very quickly.
10 Because you just can't close the
11 hospital and build another one. I'm
12 sorry. Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: We are
14 going to have 26 through 30, and I am
15 going to ask Paula Macelli, the
16 representative of Borough President
17 Marshall would like to say a few words.

18 MS. MACELLI: Good afternoon.
19 My name is Paula Macelli, and I am
20 representing Borough President Helen
21 Marshall. I have a prepared statement
22 which I would be happy to give except
23 everything has been said either by the
24 colleagues in government or all of you
25 that are here today. I just wanted to

1 May 10, 2012
2 add one thing that hasn't been raised.
3 That is the entire Borough of Queens
4 has experienced a loss of five
5 hospitals in less than 10 years. We
6 have seen the results of that
7 throughout the Borough. We watched
8 this very closely. We visit our
9 hospitals. We are in touch with the
10 administrations of our hospitals almost
11 on a daily basis. We know the
12 struggles that all of our hospitals are
13 going through right now in trying to
14 meet the demand that has occurred even
15 before the closures, but certainly more
16 intensely since the closures. They are
17 doing a wonderful job. They are doing
18 the best job they can possibly do with
19 the resources that they have.
20 But what I wanted to mention was that
21 just about four years ago, Peninsula
22 Hospital submitted a request for a
23 certificate of need application for
24 cardiac catheterization, and they were
25 approved. It was granted. So our

1 May 10, 2012
2 question is if it was deemed necessary
3 four years ago that this peninsula have
4 cardiac cat services and other
5 essential services to the benefit of
6 the people that live here, why is that
7 no longer necessary?

8 MR. HOMISH: Hi guys. Thanks
9 for coming. My name is Kevin Homish.
10 I'm an x-ray tech from Peninsula
11 Hospital. I can't speak like everybody
12 else does. All I can tell you is some
13 of my experiences that I have had
14 working at Peninsula. I haven't been
15 there as long as long as everybody else
16 in this room. God knows that. These
17 guys have been here for 30, 40, even 50
18 years, some of them. I see all of my
19 coworkers around me; x-ray techs, lab
20 technicians, nurses, doctors,
21 environmental workers. You name it,
22 they are all here, and everybody in
23 this room in way or the other has used
24 Peninsula Hospital, everybody in this
25 room. Now, I don't know what that

1 May 10, 2012
2 means to you guys, but if you were
3 standing where I am, you would
4 definitely see the light. It is not
5 about words, and you guys know this
6 more than anybody, but it is about
7 action, right. So the only thing you
8 guys need to do is step up the game,
9 put the hospital back into action, put
10 all of us back to work, and we need to
11 start saving lives again. That's it.
12 It is that simple.

13 MS. LAWLESS: Hi. Good
14 afternoon. My name is Kathleen
15 Lawless. I worked at Peninsula
16 Hospital. I live in Broad Channel. I
17 was a patient at Peninsula Hospital,
18 and we are all saddened by the closing
19 of the hospital, and most of us are
20 shocked because of the circumstances
21 that have led to that closing. Some of
22 those circumstances were engineered.
23 My hope and I think the hope of
24 everybody here, everybody has expressed
25 all the logistics, all the numbers, and

1 May 10, 2012
2 that has all been covered. But I think
3 everyone here hopes that the Department
4 of Health and the government, the
5 Governor, put the hospital as right as
6 fast as they closed. They should open
7 the hospital as speedily as they closed
8 it. There was no reason for this
9 facility to be shut down the way it
10 was, with lack of regard for every
11 person who lived in Rockaway. No one
12 was aware that their doctors wouldn't
13 be there. I worked in the switchboard.
14 We had people calling up hysterically
15 because they didn't know where their
16 doctors were. All of this was pointed
17 out before I realized that, but I just
18 hope that you put as much effort into
19 opening the hospital as you put into
20 closing it. Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN ULRICH: Good
22 afternoon, Commissioners. My name is
23 Eric Ulrich. I am a member of the City
24 Council. I represent along with my
25 colleagues in government a large

1 May 10, 2012
2 portion of the Rockaway Peninsula. I
3 am very sad that we are here today to
4 talk about the closure of Peninsula
5 Hospital. I was hoping that we could
6 have this meeting before the hospital
7 was closed, as was prescribed by law,
8 that was not the case. I am also
9 disappointed that Commissioner Shah
10 didn't see fit to stay past 5:00 p.m.,
11 because he is not here. Four hours, in
12 my opinion, is not a lot to ask for
13 when you are a public servant. I sit
14 through hearings at City Hall.
15 Sometimes they go four, five and six
16 hours. He is the Commissioner, he is a
17 public servant, he works for us. We
18 don't work for him. He should still be
19 here. The closure of this hospital has
20 resulted in a health care emergency,
21 and make no mistake, it is an
22 emergency, and we are still feeling the
23 impact of that. Peninsula Hospital is
24 not located in my district. It is in
25 Council Member James Sanders' district.

1 May 10, 2012
2 But it is the primary hospital that
3 serves most if not all of my
4 constituents from Breezy Point all the
5 way down to the Dayton Towers and every
6 community in between. The closure of
7 the hospital has added critical minutes
8 to every ambulance ride down to the
9 emergency room. As we know in this
10 room, when you are having a cardiac
11 emergency, when somebody is going into
12 labor or when somebody has been hurt
13 badly, every minute counts, and it
14 literally could mean the difference
15 between life and death. Even if one
16 were able to overlook somehow the
17 amount of time required to reach the
18 emergency room at Saint John's
19 Episcopal Hospital, we can't assume
20 that they are going to be able to
21 absorb the amount of patients and the
22 amount of people, especially during the
23 summer months when thousands of people
24 will flock to the beaches, and people
25 will be God forbid will be either

1 May 10, 2012

2 drowning in the ocean or hurt somehow
3 on the beach or the boardwalk. We need
4 a full time medical facility either
5 centrally located in the middle of the
6 peninsula or two full time health care
7 facilities that serve the people of the
8 Rockaway peninsula.

9 There are more than 1,000 hospital
10 workers, many of whom are my
11 constituents and I know many of whom
12 are here today. They are now on the
13 unemployment line. That is not right.
14 They devoted their entire careers to
15 public service at the hospital. Some
16 of them, their whole careers have been
17 at the hospital. They are ready, they
18 are willing and they are able to return
19 to work. There is clearly a need for
20 additional access to health care.

21 There is clearly a need for additional
22 health care here on the peninsula, and
23 the fact that Peninsula Hospital
24 remains shuttered with no emergency
25 room and no plan that we know of to

1 May 10, 2012
2 meet the health care needs of the
3 peninsula, that is reprehensible, that
4 is unacceptable. The fact that we
5 don't have a plan coming from the
6 Department of Health, that is
7 inexcusable, to say the very least. It
8 is disgusting. You can say that,
9 right, it is absolutely disgusting. I
10 realize that everything that has been
11 said already, and I am not here to
12 grandstand. I waited my turn to speak.
13 I was number 27. I want to give a
14 shout out to Phil Goldfeder. He is
15 number 32. He waited too. He didn't
16 cut the line. He is waiting his turn,
17 patiently, like everybody else in this
18 room to speak. But I realize that the
19 decision and the future of Peninsula
20 Hospital is not up to you and
21 Commissioner Shah alone. But know that
22 you play a very important role, and I
23 am asking you to do everything that is
24 within your power to reopen this
25 hospital so that we can start saving

1 May 10, 2012

2 lives again. Thank you very much.

3 MS. RYAN: Good afternoon. My
4 name is Marnie Ryan. I am life long
5 resident of this peninsula. I was born
6 in Saint John's Hospital, which was
7 then known as Saint Joe's, and I am
8 here as a resident of Dayton Towers. I
9 would like to speak on behalf of the
10 residents of the Rockaways to say that
11 in addition to the hundreds and
12 thousands of nursing home beds that you
13 heard about at the beginning of the
14 talk, there are also hundreds of
15 elderly living in Dayton Towers
16 community that are in need of services.
17 The closure of this hospital, as you
18 have heard, will be causing deaths. I
19 am also a licensed physical therapist.
20 I received part of my student training
21 at Peninsula Hospital. I received
22 amazing training there.
23 I would like to share a personal story.
24 Two years ago, my father, who has COPD
25 and has emphysema and uses oxygen at

1 May 10, 2012
2 home. I was called at work by my
3 mother to say that he was having
4 shortness of breath. I told her to
5 call 911. My father was brought by
6 ambulance to Peninsula Hospital. By
7 the time I arrived, he was within
8 minutes of being intubated. He was in
9 respiratory distress. The staff in the
10 emergency room were able to stabilize
11 him so that he did not have to be put
12 onto a respirator. He was admitted,
13 treated and discharged. The staff was
14 highly professional, highly trained,
15 and they saved his life. Now that
16 Peninsula Hospital is closed and Saint
17 John's is often on diversion, I live in
18 fear that when he has a COPD
19 exacerbation, as you know that COPD
20 patients are known to have, that where
21 will he go, what will we do? We are
22 praying every night that he is stable,
23 and we can maintain him at home. I
24 would also like to add that for each of
25 you sitting at this dais, I wonder if

1 May 10, 2012

2 any of you have hospitals that are
3 diversion where you live, and have had
4 hospitals that are closing. Thank you.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good
6 afternoon, everyone, and thank you all
7 for being here. Thank you from the
8 Department of Health. I want to
9 address the specific issue of number
10 you have children that we have in this
11 community. Everyone in this room, at
12 least 95 percent of the people in this
13 room have children, young children in
14 this community. One of my children was
15 born with a hole in her heart. One of
16 the reasons that I am here is because I
17 wanted to be very close to a health
18 care facility that would cater to the
19 needs in case something happened to
20 her.

21 When you look at the number of schools
22 that are in this community and the
23 number of children, young children, who
24 are at any given time of the days are
25 in schools and a number of schools that

1 May 10, 2012
2 are down here, what are we going to
3 doing about providing the quality care
4 that is going to be needed in the event
5 of anything critical happening? We an
6 increase in kids coming into this
7 community. We have a rising number of
8 new families coming into this
9 community. I hear a lot of people
10 talking about the senior citizens. I'm
11 not even going to touch on that. I am
12 talking about children, who they are
13 our responsibility as parents to look
14 after them. If we are not looking out
15 for our children, what are we going to
16 be doing about the process moving
17 forward? There is a lot of things
18 going on here that we as a community
19 were completely left out of. To the
20 point that the hospital is closed right
21 now, we are still not given the options
22 that we need. The answers that we need
23 from the Department of Health are
24 critical answers for us as parents to
25 impact the livelihood of our children.

1 May 10, 2012

2 The mental health issues that are
3 resulting from the closing of the
4 hospital has not been addressed. The
5 staff and what the staff went through
6 because of unfair practices of what
7 happened at the hospital is unheard of.
8 It violated so many ethical and human
9 rights issues that would have dealt
10 with the impacts on individuals who
11 served that hospital 40 years, 30
12 years, 20 years.

13 It is unjust and it is not right for us
14 to move forward in a society where we
15 cannot get up and go to work and give
16 our full commitment to work and service
17 our communities without these
18 underhanded practices happening. If we
19 can't set an example right now, what
20 are the examples we are setting to our
21 children moving forward, for them to be
22 fair and just and right in getting up
23 to go to work, to serve the needs as
24 civil servants and people in our
25 communities. So I am asking as a

1 May 10, 2012

2 parent give us the tools that we need
3 to secure the well being and safety of
4 our children and the numbers of schools
5 that we have in this community, because
6 we do have a lot of those down here.

7 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: I am going
8 to ask 30 through 35, please, and also
9 just another reminder that if anyone is
10 in need of signing interpreters, we do
11 have them available here. Just please
12 let us know. Identify yourselves.
13 Thank you.

14 MR. DISALVIO: Good afternoon. I
15 apologize for being late.
16 Unfortunately, the hours that you
17 picked are ridiculous for those who
18 work. I am the Assembly District
19 Leader in the 23rd Assembly District,
20 and I am very upset, outraged, and
21 annoyed. If I had my way, I would go
22 to jail today to prove it, but I
23 promise to be on my best behavior. I'm
24 holding the picture of a coffin. This
25 symbolizes those who have died and will

1 May 10, 2012
2 die and will die due to the closing of
3 Peninsula General Hospital. If I might
4 say, I have to give full disclosure. I
5 am born and raised in this community.
6 I feel that Peninsula Hospital, the
7 people who work there were our family,
8 okay. Each and every one of the people
9 who worked there were real. There was
10 no plastics in this community. As in
11 many other areas, you go into places
12 and they are very cold, and they don't
13 care. They cared.
14 But let's talk statistics if I might
15 take time to talk. Saint John's
16 Hospital, the only hospital you left us
17 with, has eight CCU beds, coronary care
18 unit beds. So God forbid any of us
19 have a heart attack, we are dead, okay,
20 we are dead. I can go back to 1995,
21 when my mom, God rest her, was rushed
22 to Peninsula Hospital on August 12th, a
23 couple of minutes after midnight. My
24 birthday was August 11th. She
25 collapsed. She was in congestive heart

1 May 10, 2012
2 failure, full of fluids, and she needed
3 a CCU bed. There was no CCU or no ICU
4 beds that night. But Dr. Frieda, I
5 don't know, are you here, Frieda?
6 Frieda, I love her, God bless her,
7 should be 100 and still be practicing.
8 Frieda was in the emergency room. My
9 mom stayed eight days in that emergency
10 room. They took such great care of
11 her, okay. You have no idea. She
12 needed blood, platelets. My mom had
13 cancer, and her number was up on her
14 neck, as they say. Thanks to the great
15 staff of Peninsula, she didn't die when
16 she should have died right away. She
17 lived until January 31st when she
18 passed. They did a beautiful job.
19 Just to say eight ICU beds, I am going
20 to continue, in Saint John's, 12
21 maternity beds, 144 medical and
22 surgical beds. 4 neonatal, 6
23 pediatric, loads of psychiatric beds
24 for us nuts. A total of 257 beds. You
25 take our community hospital, you close

1 May 10, 2012
2 it.
3 Now I live in Rockaway Park. Any of us
4 who live in the west end of town, as
5 you know today, you see that the
6 streets are closed off. I had to be
7 dropped and walk because you can't park
8 and you can't get around here. They
9 are doing work on the Cross Bay Bridge,
10 they are doing work on the Marine
11 Parkway Bridge. It is a death waiting
12 to happen. So you tell me when I call
13 you I have to go to Kings Highway
14 Hospital, Coney Island Hospital. By
15 the time I get there, I am dead. One
16 of the ladies from community board
17 didn't realize. She went down to Saint
18 John's. The other night, her son had
19 opened his lip and needed stitches. He
20 bled all night. She went into Saint
21 John's and was refused. They don't do
22 that oral there. She had to go
23 somewhere else. It is unacceptable,
24 absolutely unacceptable. What is even
25 more unacceptable that we took our time

1 May 10, 2012
2 to be here, and Dr. Shah left. That is
3 ridiculous, and I do want to say while
4 I am standing here at the same time, I
5 do want to thank a number of the
6 elected officials who have been there.
7 I want to call those who haven't been
8 there, because each and every day, we
9 had a rally outside of Peninsula during
10 the summer. I think it was like days,
11 in the evenings. Down in the city, I
12 got two buses and loaded the people,
13 and we had a great turnout. I do want
14 to thank Senator Malcolm Smith, Senator
15 Shirley Huntley. I want to thank Joe
16 Addabo and his staff member all the
17 time. I want to thank Assemblyman Phil
18 Goldfeder. I want to thank Councilman
19 Ulrich and Congressman Turner. For
20 those who I didn't call and they are
21 sitting in the room, they should be
22 ashamed of themselves, because they had
23 a rep and they never responded to our
24 community, and they should be voted out
25 of office. You know what, I will call

1 May 10, 2012
2 their names. Ms. Titus is sitting here
3 with us. Thank you for finding
4 Rockaway, Ms. Titus. I just want to
5 say to you guys please, please, you did
6 it. I am going to finish in one
7 second. You did an RFP which no one
8 knows about. No one knows who is in
9 the running. I know two people who
10 want it that are real. We need this
11 place open. Don't play games with our
12 lives, because we are going to hold all
13 the debts on your hands. Thank you.

14 MS. KAUFMAN: My name is Marilee
15 Kaufman. I have lived in Rockaway for
16 the past 58 years. I consider myself a
17 life long resident. Last year,
18 unfortunately, I had a heart attack and
19 was rushed to Peninsula Hospital. I
20 had to be stabilized there, and sent to
21 another hospital. If not for the
22 excellent care I received in their
23 emergency room, I would not be standing
24 here before you today. They were an
25 amazing group of people who got on the

1 May 10, 2012
2 phone, they got my cardiologist on the
3 phone, they got an ambulance service on
4 the phone, and they shipped me off to
5 another hospital to have stents put in,
6 because they didn't do it. But they
7 were amazing. It was like a conductor
8 leading a fine orchestra that saved my
9 life. Those were the people in the
10 emergency room of Peninsula Hospital.
11 To close this hospital is a
12 catastrophe. I would like to see you
13 close the beaches and say hey, folks,
14 we don't have any facilities for you.
15 What would happen, what would happen?
16 Close the beaches to the public. We
17 don't have hospitals for you. If you
18 drown, you put up signs swim at your
19 own risk. Too bad, you are going to
20 the beach at 11 o'clock, swim at your
21 own risk. The cops come and lock you
22 up. This is silly. This is a life
23 saving place. We need this hospital.
24 It is our lifeline. We cannot be
25 shipped, as we were told before, to

1 May 10, 2012

2 other hospitals. There is no time in
3 emergencies.

4 I have four grandchildren. We live
5 here on the peninsula. I live in
6 Dayton over here, and you know what,
7 there are plenty of elderly. I just
8 turned 71. There are more elderly
9 people than myself here. You what,
10 guys? The reality is the ball is in
11 your court. You have to be the ones
12 that stand up and save us. Make sure
13 there are no deaths on this peninsula
14 because of this terrible situation.
15 Thank you for your time.

16 ASSEMBLYMAN GOLDFEDER: I
17 appreciate this community because every
18 person and most people have gotten up
19 here and have said thank you to the
20 panelists for coming. I want to be the
21 first one to go on record and while I
22 will get to that, I want to thank every
23 person who came out here today. It is
24 the people in this community who have
25 been out there night in and night out,

1 May 10, 2012
2 who have written the letters, who have
3 made the phone calls that got us to
4 where we are today. Because as many of
5 you know, we didn't see this day coming
6 only two or three weeks ago. So we
7 didn't know where we were going to be
8 today. I am proud of everybody who I
9 have stood with to get to where we are
10 today. So thank you. I want to add
11 to what others have said, Commissioner
12 Clancy, and you have been responsive,
13 but I too am disappointed that Dr. Shah
14 has not, didn't feel it was important
15 enough to stay here and listen to the
16 people from this community. I respect
17 his expertise, but when it comes to
18 working with communities, he is no
19 expert. That I can tell you for sure.
20 My staff is going to be very angry with
21 me because they prepared all these
22 remarks which I am not going to read.
23 Because tonight, I feel like I need to
24 speak from the heart. I am here as an
25 elected official, but I am one of the

1 May 10, 2012
2 few elected officials that lives on
3 this peninsula. I was born and raised
4 here, and now I am raising my two kids
5 here, and God knows I am afraid. I am
6 afraid to go to sleep at night because
7 I don't know what is going to happen in
8 the middle of the night.
9 God forbid, everybody heard the story
10 over the weekend. There was an
11 accident in Breezy Point, and they had
12 to take the patients to Brooklyn. How
13 long did it take? Who could have been
14 in the back of that ambulance that
15 needed emergency services and could not
16 get it? That is the bottom line. We
17 have 130,000 people on this peninsula,
18 and that is before the summer season
19 has even started. Hundreds of
20 thousands of people are going to be
21 hurt, are going to be here because they
22 don't have access to care. One
23 drowning on the beach takes every
24 ambulance from this peninsula to go
25 respond. What happens if something

1 May 10, 2012
2 else happens? We don't have the
3 services we need, and nobody to this
4 point has been responsive to the
5 community. Nobody has thought about
6 the people that this going to affect.
7 We have seen money saving decisions,
8 economic decisions, all decisions
9 except for community decisions. I
10 think it is about time someone starts
11 listening to this community. Peninsula
12 Hospital wasn't just a hospital.
13 Peninsula Hospital was a family.
14 Peninsula Hospital was caring,
15 compassionate place where you can go in
16 and you can feel like you are going to
17 get taken care of and get the best
18 quality of care. Those nurses and
19 doctors who are here today, I commend
20 them not just for being here today, but
21 for years and years and years of real
22 public service to this community. I
23 want to close by saying that we have
24 been fed line after line, after line
25 after line. I just spoke last week.

1 May 10, 2012

2 Every year, the Water Board comes out
3 to talk about water rates, and you
4 speak and you speak until you are blue
5 in the face, and they raise it anyway.
6 Everybody here has made their point
7 clear. But now we need someone to
8 listen. We have been given a trustee
9 who showed clearly that she had no care
10 for this community. We need a
11 Department of Health. The goal should
12 have never been about coming in to shut
13 the hospital down, and that is what
14 happened. We need a Department of
15 Health that is going to work with the
16 community and most importantly for the
17 community. Thank you.

18 MS. HOPKINS: Hello, my name is
19 Laura Hopkins. I have lived in the
20 Rockaway community for over 30 years.
21 We were down south for a few years, and
22 came back. One of the reasons we did
23 come back was that I brought my father.
24 My father is 81 years old, and he was
25 diagnosed with a lot of different

1 May 10, 2012
2 things. But the point was I know the
3 high quality service that is available,
4 the health care service that is
5 available here in New York. And so I
6 brought him back, and one of the
7 doctors from Peninsula Hospital was
8 able to figure out that he was
9 misdiagnosed. They were giving him six
10 pills a day for the wrong thing, but he
11 was able to turn that around. Truly, I
12 am giving honor to everyone here and
13 all of the constituents, everyone, the
14 regular people just like me,
15 Assemblywoman Titus and Goldfeder and
16 everybody that is here. This is
17 something that goes across demographic
18 lines. It really doesn't matter if you
19 live in the projects, if you live in a
20 million dollar home. Everybody gets
21 sick. We need this hospital. We can't
22 afford to let it just go away. We have
23 seen what happens in our community and
24 in communities like ours when we let
25 the services go down.

1 May 10, 2012

2 When I came back after being gone for

3 10 years, and I saw the grocery story,

4 that was a vibrant grocery store. A

5 couple of blocks from the hospital,

6 there were vibrant little stores there.

7 They are gone now and they are not

8 back, so we can't just assume that we

9 are just going to go ahead and let this

10 hospital go down, and it is going to be

11 that. We have to make up our mind that

12 we are going to do the things that need

13 to be done to get this hospital back.

14 If you walk down there and see right

15 around that hospital, you see it

16 surrounded by nursing homes. There is

17 about four or five nursing homes right

18 around the hospital. What is going to

19 happen if someone gets sick in this

20 nursing home. Saint John's cannot

21 handle all of this. They just can't.

22 We don't even have to hypothetically

23 think what would happen if we had an

24 emergency. Just last year, we had an

25 emergency, and the Rockaways had to be

1 May 10, 2012

2 evacuated. Suppose, God forbid, we had
3 something like that again, and someone
4 got hurt and we couldn't get off this
5 peninsula. Then what? What are we
6 going to do?

7 So there are resources. I thank God
8 that you are having this forum, because
9 we all need to get together. We need
10 to write to our elected officials, and
11 we really need to get this hospital.
12 If it takes having fund raisers, if it
13 takes everybody coming up with a little
14 piece of money to get this hospital
15 back where it needs to be, we need this
16 hospital. Thank you.

17 MS. JOHNSON: Good evening. My
18 name is Felicia Johnson. I am a
19 resident of Rockaway. I am also on the
20 community planning board, but most
21 importantly, I'm not the expert in the
22 health care aspect of it. I am a
23 geriatric social worker, having spent
24 most of my career, over 26 years as a
25 geriatric social worker, but most of my

1 May 10, 2012
2 career here on the peninsula in the
3 nursing homes. I happen to work in the
4 nursing home that is attached to Saint
5 John's Hospital.
6 I find it very interesting, and I
7 believe the population statistics that
8 you may have used based on the Berger
9 Commission for why you felt that this
10 peninsula did not need two viable
11 hospitals was based on population that
12 was from when Moses had razor stubble.
13 But if you actually came out and looked
14 at what is going on out here, we
15 understand the Berger Commission is
16 about money. People, please don't get
17 me wrong, but let's understand that
18 health care is a business and it is
19 about the business of money. Basically
20 what the Berger Commission wanted to do
21 was to save the money that was coming
22 out of the Medicaid, Medicare pot. So
23 they decided from the top of New York
24 State down to the end of Long Island
25 how many beds needed to be reduced

1 May 10, 2012
2 everywhere in order to reduce the
3 amount of money coming out of that pot.
4 That is why they looked at the
5 hospital. They found one thing wrong
6 with it. They said you know what, we
7 can reduce X amount of beds.
8 However, they did not take into account
9 at the time, Auburn by the Sea hadn't
10 been done, Auburn East hadn't been
11 done, they hadn't redone some of the
12 housing developments that are out
13 there. I am not going to talk about
14 killing people health wise. I am not
15 going to talk about that. You have
16 enough doctors and nurses and experts
17 here. I am talking about killing this
18 community economically. Because while
19 we are trying to sell homes and houses
20 and get a tax base here because tax
21 base equals what? Money. Money equals
22 what? Votes. You want to know why
23 votes don't count where we are?
24 Because we have no tax base here. So
25 now you are trying to get people out

1 May 10, 2012
2 here to buy these homes that are going
3 to put money into our economy to build
4 us up, and you are cutting us off at
5 the knees. Because who is going to
6 want to buy a house and pay a million
7 dollars, a half a million dollars for a
8 house, and have children and bring them
9 up, and you tell them that you don't
10 know where they are going to go if
11 something happens to their children,
12 that the closest hospital -- we are
13 right next door to Saint John's
14 Hospital, and you are telling me that
15 my elderly residents that I feel like
16 those are my grandparents, they have to
17 be diverted to Nassau County, they have
18 to be diverted to Long Beach, they have
19 to be diverted to Mercy Hospital to get
20 care. You know what they are telling
21 me? I would rather stay here, I would
22 rather stay here because the hospital
23 that is supposed to be a selling asset
24 for a nursing home. You have a nursing
25 home connected to a hospital. What

1 May 10, 2012
2 about those residents in Peninsula?
3 Where are you diverting them to? Where
4 are they going, where are they getting
5 their health care from? So I find it
6 appalling, yet I understand, because
7 the plan that the Department of Health
8 gave us for evacuation pretty much is
9 the same plan you gave us for closing
10 the hospital, which is nothing. There
11 is no consideration for any kind of
12 emergent care, urgent care, any type of
13 care for the residents on this
14 peninsula. You have more drug addicts
15 on this peninsula. What happens, their
16 kidneys fail. You are going to tell me
17 now I can't even get people over to
18 Saint John's dialysis because they have
19 no slots open there. You need beds for
20 dialysis.
21 What happened to the Certificate of
22 Need that Saint John's put in for that?
23 I don't know. They said it was passed,
24 but we have had no movement. Yet you
25 close a hospital that had dialysis

1 May 10, 2012

2 stations as well. You close a hospital

3 that actually had a pediatric unit to

4 now have a hospital that has how many,

5 I think like six beds. But yet you

6 want us to try to build this community

7 economically to guess what, put money

8 in your pockets. I really don't

9 understand. I am not trying to be

10 disrespectful, but honestly, I really

11 don't understand where the thinking

12 came from when you were looking at the

13 growth, the population and the

14 demographics of this community. We are

15 isolated, we are isolated, isolated,

16 isolated.

17 So now you give us one hospital.

18 Tuesday night, we had a community board

19 meeting. I am going to wrap it up. We

20 had a community board meeting, and they

21 were giving us the proposal about the

22 off shore natural gas line, blah, blah,

23 blah, and where they are going to have

24 to drill, and blah, blah, blah, closed

25 on Flatbush Avenue. Everybody's

1 May 10, 2012

2 concern was what about the ambulances,

3 please take into consideration the

4 ambulances. What is going to happen?

5 We are going to try to have two lanes

6 open, we are going to try to have two

7 lanes going one way, two lanes going

8 another. What is going to happen?

9 Guys, honestly, I am so disgusted right

10 now that the Commissioner did not see

11 fit to even clear his calendar. No

12 disrespect to you all. I am sure you

13 are lovely people and you will take all

14 the information back, but if this was a

15 meeting that was set up by him and he

16 agreed to be here, how dare he take a

17 phone call, act like it was so

18 important that he would walk out, and

19 then not even come back. That just

20 shows to me the lack of respect and

21 regard that you have for this

22 community.

23 My last point while we are talking

24 about money, that I urge my electeds to

25 let's look at the fact why Peninsula

1 May 10, 2012
2 closed, because you are serving a
3 population that don't have insurance.
4 How about we do legislation to get
5 everybody insured so that when it comes
6 time for health care, people can get
7 their health care and the hospitals can
8 be compensated for the care that they
9 are putting out. That is what we need
10 to look at and making sure that
11 everyone is ensured so that you don't
12 run into the financial straights that
13 you ran into with Peninsula with people
14 being given \$10,000 worth of services
15 and the state is reimbursing you \$300.

16 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Thank you
17 for your comments, ma'am. We will call
18 up the next five, I believe 36 through
19 40. Thank you.

20 MR. SMITH: Excuse me. I am
21 Floyd Smith the Third. My father was
22 Floyd Junior, and my grandfather was
23 Floyd Senior. I was born in Chester,
24 South Carolina. We like to say big
25 foot country, where men are men and the

1 May 10, 2012
2 sheep know it. I am here representing
3 the Concerned Citizens of Rockaway,
4 which I am the Executive Director of.
5 I am here under false pretenses. I'm
6 not really concerned that much about
7 Peninsula Hospital. I am here about
8 water safety. That is my issue. That
9 ties in because if you have a drowning
10 in this area, they are probably going
11 to come to Peninsula Hospital. If it
12 doesn't exist, they have no where to go
13 but Coney Island or Brookdale or Kings
14 County. Let me tell you, you don't
15 want to go to Kings County. I have
16 been there. As you can see, I had a
17 stroke. I was there, and it was 500
18 prisoners handcuffed to other officers,
19 and I waited for two hours. I also had
20 an incident in March of this year at
21 Office Max where I got hurt. They took
22 me in an ambulance to Saint John's. At
23 the time, the house fell down in the
24 Rockaways. There were 300 people there
25 waiting for emergency. I waited five

1 May 10, 2012
2 hours to see a doctor. So that by
3 itself gives you an idea of how bad off
4 we can be if we had an emergency
5 anywhere in Rockaway. This is Mickey
6 Mouse to say we don't need two
7 hospitals. Maybe we don't, but we need
8 to expand one of them or join the two
9 together, like it was talked of six
10 months ago. Because we definitely need
11 emergency care available. There is the
12 radiology, which I had a couple of
13 times at Peninsula is gone now. Then
14 go to Saint John's. It went away
15 somewhere. We don't know where it
16 went. But you have an incident, like I
17 had a stroke, you have to be treated in
18 two minutes or three minutes. You are
19 not going to get to Coney Island or
20 Brookdale or Jamaica or where ever in
21 three or four minutes. You're just not
22 going to do it. None of these bridges
23 are working when they're not broken
24 down, or it's not closed or whatever.
25 So all I can say is I hope Commissioner

1 May 10, 2012

2 Shah enjoys his trip back to where ever
3 he came from because he should have
4 stuck around for my presentation alone.
5 I'm pretty good. In fact, somebody
6 said I should have my own television
7 show like Al Sharpton. Maybe he is
8 right. However, I know you gentlemen
9 will tell Commissioner Shah what I
10 said, just by the way he sat up and you
11 leaned forward, I know I made the
12 point. So thanks very much, gentlemen,
13 for listening to me, and I'll hop on
14 back to my seat. Take care.

15 MS. IRVIN: Good evening. My
16 name is Annette Irvin. I am the
17 chaplain of the now defunct Peninsula
18 Hospital slash Auburn Cancer Support
19 Group. The hospital is not just a
20 hospital to us. The hospital is a part
21 of this community. It is a teaching
22 place. Whenever there is a health fair
23 to be given in this community, we can
24 pick up the phone and say Liz, I need.
25 I need someone to do diabetes testing,

1 May 10, 2012
2 someone to do high blood pressure
3 testing. The hospital worked with the
4 community to educate the people that
5 live in the community, and the hospital
6 is a part of the Ready Rockaway Plan.
7 What are we now going to do since the
8 hospital is closed? Where are the
9 people who receive their chemotherapy
10 going to go?
11 My mother passed away in the hospital.
12 She had a very rare form of cancer.
13 They could not treat here, but they
14 could sustain her, do all of her
15 testing, make her feel good when she
16 walked in the door, because people knew
17 her. We are a community that is
18 interictally related. I grew up here,
19 I went to school at 180, I went to Far
20 Rock. There are a lot of people in
21 this room that I went to school with
22 that know that without this hospital,
23 our community will be one that is not
24 accessible for medical care, nor will
25 those houses be sold. Every ad for

1 May 10, 2012
2 Auburn by the Sea says two hospitals,
3 schools, location to public transit.
4 All of these things were selling
5 points. Now what are we going to do?
6 Our support group, people who would
7 have cancer, that had a place to come
8 to once a month to care and to share
9 our knowledge with each other.
10 But my biggest issue, my niece just
11 walked in. Last Sunday, she was shot
12 in the leg on 51st Street. She could
13 have done zip and been in Peninsula
14 Hospital, but it is dead. She had to
15 have a 25 minute ambulance ride to
16 Jamaica Hospital. She could have died
17 on her way to Jamaica Hospital. She
18 was an innocent bystander, and received
19 a bullet in the leg. Her neighbor
20 received one in the hand. She was
21 lucky that they could take her. She
22 drove herself, matter of fact, to Saint
23 John's, because she did not want to
24 wait. But my niece could have died in
25 that 25 minute ride. Not only those

1 May 10, 2012
2 that are being shot, but it hasn't been
3 said, heart attacks. We have one of
4 the highest rates of asthma in children
5 in this city. Another thing. In my
6 previous life, I was the chief of
7 disability processing for Social
8 Security Disability. Saint John's
9 gives the worst records for anyone
10 pending disability that is anywhere in
11 this city. Peninsula's records were
12 succinct. You could tell what was
13 going on with the patient. The ones
14 from Saint John's -- we need this
15 hospital to help with the disability
16 process, to educate and to save lives.
17 Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: 41 through
19 45, please.

20 MR. MARRERO: 41 through 50.

21 MS. WARDEN: Good afternoon. My
22 name is Annie Warden. I have lived on
23 this peninsula for 45 years. I live
24 in a co-op with 350 families. We live
25 four blocks away from Peninsula

1 May 10, 2012
2 Hospital. This was a comfort to me and
3 my family, because I have an asthmatic
4 grandson. I don't know if any of you
5 witnessed someone having an asthma
6 attack, but it is horrifying. To be
7 able to get to that hospital in minutes
8 was reassuring. That is why I live
9 there. I am also a member of the
10 Auburn Cancer Support Group. We were
11 relieved when the hospice unit came.
12 That was such a blessing to people who
13 had to use that unit. We cannot afford
14 not to have that hospital. I want my
15 family to live, not to be afraid. We
16 want that hospital, we are appealing to
17 you. I don't know. Last year, when
18 you have an asthmatic person in your
19 family and you have to run to the
20 hospital once a week. To go to that
21 hospital, and the emergency room was
22 always packed, always. The nursing
23 home, the people from the nursing home
24 that have to use that emergency room.
25 The population on this peninsula has

1 May 10, 2012

2 grown.

3 In 1970, you had 98,228 people. In
4 2010, 114,978. So don't even think
5 that you don't need that hospital. You
6 need Peninsula Hospital and a trauma
7 unit. You have more accidents,
8 gunshots. We need the hospital. I am
9 appealing to you today not to turn your
10 back on Far Rockaway. Help us, help us
11 to be a viable unit, a viable
12 community. Thank you.

13 MR. SILVERMAN: My name is
14 Normal Silverman. I have been a
15 resident of the Rockaway community for
16 54 years. As long as my family has
17 been here, I felt that Peninsula
18 Hospital was part of the family. When
19 my father suffered a heart attack in
20 his doctor's office, the doctor said
21 drive your car a few blocks over to
22 Peninsula Emergency Room, they will
23 take care of you. They did. He was in
24 the hospital for about a week. He got
25 another 30 years of life. I would I

1 May 10, 2012
2 would hate to think of him trying to
3 drive on the Van Wyck Expressway up to
4 Jamaica Hospital or some other place,
5 because we would have lost him right
6 then. When my wife had a serious
7 accident and fell, and had a broken
8 pelvis and a broken wrist, she asked
9 for Peninsula Hospital. They took care
10 of her for a week. I was able to go
11 back and forth, bring her things from
12 home that she wanted, and take care.
13 It was in the community. When she was
14 a little bit better, I was able to
15 wheel her in the wheelchair over to the
16 rehab center, where she was for another
17 five weeks, and then came home, and the
18 problems were taken care of. We can't
19 have Peninsula Hospital taken away from
20 us. The State Health Department has
21 been under pressure over many years to
22 reduce the cost of medical care and
23 health care in the State of New York,
24 and I am sure we all hear about it.
25 The Berger Commission was appointed

1 May 10, 2012

2 with the responsibility of saying which

3 places could be closed. They did look

4 at the Rockaways, and they came up with

5 a solution here about adding beds,

6 never about closing any one. They said

7 they see the value of community

8 hospitals, and they should not be

9 abandoned or unnecessarily targeted for

10 closure.

11 It appears that Peninsula Hospital was

12 targeted for closure. These hospitals

13 tend to be low cost providers, and

14 appear to provide acceptable quality of

15 service. I think that Peninsula was a

16 little better than acceptable, but

17 without it, it is not even acceptable.

18 A few years ago, the Peninsula Board,

19 in an effort to improve the financial

20 position and services at Peninsula

21 joined with the Medisys Health System.

22 Medisys President and CEO, David Rosen,

23 was known as a leader in the field, and

24 his success at obtaining visible

25 improvements at Jamaica Hospital. Now

1 May 10, 2012
2 he is known for his conviction for
3 bribery of State Senator Carl Kruger I
4 am glad my community is aware of it.
5 The State of New York has to be aware
6 of the corruption that has gone on, in
7 some cases under the nose of the State
8 Health Department. If we have to do
9 that to get this solved, I believe we
10 should be doing that. These people
11 were convicted of accepting bribes.
12 What are the bribes for? Jamaica got a
13 new nursing and rehab center, a new 64
14 slice CT Scan and a trauma center. If
15 Jamaica got these benefits from this
16 arrangement, did Peninsula lose out on
17 something there that they should have
18 gotten? The payments were for
19 something. All parties were under the
20 supervision of the State Department of
21 Health, which must approve any major
22 improvement in hospital facilities. In
23 the last couple of weeks, I have been
24 looking at the web site of the State
25 Health Department. Everything that

1 May 10, 2012
2 goes on in a hospital for a new
3 emergency room, I saw even for the new
4 bathrooms. It has to be approved. How
5 is this going on during this time? By
6 the summer of 2011, Peninsula was close
7 to bankruptcy. Medisys tried to close
8 the hospital but the Board of Directors
9 reached out to Revival Home Health
10 Care.
11 According to Crain's New York Business,
12 November 6, 2011, which you can get on
13 their web site, New York State
14 Department of Health had no objections
15 to this. DOH did not formally review
16 the Peninsula deal, because it
17 maintains no change in ownership was
18 involved. The person who was most
19 involved with this is Steven Zacheim.
20 Those who are in the field should know.
21 They allowed this to go on. He had a
22 long record of legal difficulties in
23 the health care field. With no
24 objection, the situation went on until
25 inspectors came and looked at the lab

1 May 10, 2012
2 at Peninsula Hospital. I believe at
3 this time, they already had decided
4 that we have to close Peninsula
5 Hospital, rather than decide a case of
6 fraudulent paperwork with the
7 Department of Health, the Attorney
8 General to the U.S. Attorney. They
9 took the punishment out on this
10 community. They closed the hospital
11 here. They could said close the lab
12 and outsource their work. They could
13 have found another lab and sent them in
14 immediately. The staff worked weekends
15 and nights to get it in shape. They
16 never came and checked the lab again.
17 Let the hospital close. I believe
18 within the Health Department, they were
19 more concerned with burying the
20 problem, and in a way burying some of
21 us that were finding the truth and
22 cleaning up the situation.

23 MR. MARRERO: Thank you, sir.

24 MR. SILVERMAN: What they have
25 to do is find those who are interested

1 May 10, 2012
2 in operating some or all of the
3 hospital, bring them together, bring it
4 in, and refer other things for the
5 prosecution that it deserves. Don't
6 make us the victims of your mistakes.

7 MR. MARRERO: Thank you, sir.
8 Thank you.

9 MS. MCGRATH: My name is
10 Christine McGrath, and I am here in two
11 roles. First of all, I would like to
12 thank you all for having the courtesy
13 and the respect to remain, to listen to
14 what this community is telling you. I
15 hope you are getting a sense of the
16 loss and the fear and the need that we
17 have. I am here in two roles. One, I
18 am a resident. I live down here. I
19 was born in the old Rockaway Beach. A
20 while ago, I had a car accident under
21 the El. Those pillars don't move.
22 Believe me, I tried to move it and it
23 doesn't work. I had to be cut out of
24 the car. I wound up, I had internal
25 bleeding. I had to have emergency

1 May 10, 2012
2 surgery. And Peninsula was closed and
3 I had to be diverted somewhere, I
4 probably would not be here. Mapquest
5 says that Coney Island is 32 minutes
6 away. I don't know where they come up
7 with those numbers. It must be at 3
8 o'clock in the morning. Have you ever
9 been on the Belt Parkway? Have you
10 ever been on the Van Wyck trying to get
11 up to Jamaica Avenue? You go no where.
12 People are going to die. My family
13 lives down here. I am concerned about
14 them to. I am also here as a health
15 care provider. I am registered nurse.
16 I work in a nursing home down on Beach
17 17th Street. We have 300 residents.
18 At least 50 percent of our residents
19 are bariatric residents. These are
20 people who weigh 300, 400, 500, 600
21 pounds. When they start to
22 decompensate, they need help
23 immediately. If Saint John's is on
24 diversion, what is going to happen? 32
25 minutes on the Belt Parkway? I don't

1 May 10, 2012
2 think so. Yes, we need to save money,
3 but yet we need to save lives. You
4 can't save money at the cost of lives.
5 If there is any question about
6 malfeasance or fraud or anything like
7 that, look into it and prosecute the
8 people who have done it. But don't
9 punish the community. Save our lives,
10 please.

11 DR. DODAKIAN: My name is Dr.
12 Wayne Dodakian. I served my residency
13 proudly at Peninsula Hospital under the
14 direction of Dr. Peter Guiny, who is
15 also here. Thank you, Dr. Guiny. I
16 would like to say first of all that the
17 absence of Commissioner Shah speaks
18 volumes. It shows that he just doesn't
19 care about us. I think if these guys
20 could be here and that lady over there
21 could be there, then he could be here
22 too. If Dr. Shah was here, as I was
23 hoping he would be, I would tell him
24 this. That as a physician, as a fellow
25 physician, I am less than pleased with

1 May 10, 2012
2 him, and I am actually quite disgusted
3 with him. Because eight months ago, I
4 sent that man a certified letter
5 overnight, begging him to help us get
6 out of the trouble we were in with
7 Medisys the first time around, and the
8 man didn't even have the decency to
9 reply to my letter. I know he received
10 it because I called the next day, and
11 his aide told me it was on his desk.
12 So he did not even care at that time,
13 and what makes you think that he cares
14 now? I think he cares even less now.
15 So shame on Dr. Shaw for betraying the
16 trust that we put in him.
17 Mr. Cook, I feel bad for you, very,
18 very bad for you. You, sir, I have had
19 a very bad tragedy fall upon you. He
20 has closed so many hospitals that he
21 has become desensitized to the human
22 cause. He has become complacent,
23 defiant, and I have to say with
24 whatever respect is due you, that you
25 have departed from reality, sir,

1 May 10, 2012
2 because you don't understand what you
3 are doing. Mr. Cook will tell you that
4 he has heard it all before. He will
5 tell you that everyone says the same
6 thing. We need the hospital open, we
7 need the jobs, we save lives. Yet in
8 his mind, he is saying everyone else
9 will be absorbed by all the other
10 hospitals in the area. That is not
11 true in this Mr. Cook, and I can tell
12 you why. Because in all the time off
13 that I have now, being laid off from
14 the hospital, I spend a lot of it at
15 Saint John's doing reconnaissance, and
16 I can tell you for a fact that that
17 hospital cannot handle the overload in
18 patients. There are ambulances in the
19 driveways there are patients strewn
20 about the hallways. That is no way to
21 treat patients. That is not a way to
22 treat the good people that work at
23 Saint John's. Should not overwork them
24 like that. That is not a good way to
25 treat patients and personnel. We all

1 May 10, 2012

2 know, Mr. Cook, you must think we are
3 idiots if you don't think we know what
4 happened here. You simply used the lab
5 as a tool to close us down because you
6 saw Peninsula Hospital crawling out of
7 the ashes, and you didn't like that.
8 It was not consistent with your plan,
9 sir.

10 One of the speakers before me said that
11 the Department of Health became aware
12 of the corruption. The Department of
13 Health is the source of the corruption.
14 Whatever respect I am due to give you,
15 I give you that, but it is all going to
16 come out, every bit of it. We all know
17 what you did with the Medisys group,
18 with Bruce Flanz, with Mounir Doss and
19 all the rest of the crooks, and we all
20 know what you are doing now for Laurie
21 Lapin Jones. We all know that the
22 corrective action plan was sent in
23 inappropriately. We all know that that
24 corrective action plan would receive a
25 very bad report from you guys. It was

1 May 10, 2012
2 sent in on purpose by Laurie Lapin
3 Jones to give you an excuse to close
4 the hospital, and that is just what you
5 did. Shame on you, shame on you. Mr.
6 Cook, I would be yelling at Dr. Shah
7 just as much if he was here, but he
8 hightailed it out of here because he is
9 a scoundrel, and you stayed to face the
10 music. At least I give you respect for
11 that. I really do, but I do not envy
12 you at your time of judgement, because
13 blood is on your hands. Please don't
14 do this. Let Peninsula Hospital open
15 as a hospital. There are several good
16 offers on the table to reopen this
17 facility as a hospital. We do not need
18 an urgent care facility. We do not
19 need another set of clinics. We need a
20 hospital that has 100 beds, so we can
21 meet your old Berger Commission
22 requirements, which are law now, for
23 400 beds for the Rockaways. It is your
24 own law. Stick to it.

25 MS. BENJAMIN: After following

1 May 10, 2012
2 that, I don't know. I have only a few
3 words to say to you, and they are
4 personal words. With my experience,
5 Nurse Rader had told you about the
6 hospice unit at Peninsula Hospital.
7 Unfortunately, my husband was a
8 recipient of the services of that unit.
9 Believe me, the people of Rockaway
10 deserve the right to live and to live
11 well with good health care, but hey
12 also deserve the right to die with
13 dignity.
14 My name is Lillian Benjamin. My
15 husband was Walter Benjamin. The care
16 that he received from the moment that
17 he entered that unit was unbelievable.
18 He had been sick with cancer, with
19 Parkinson's, and he had a speech
20 impediment, so that made it even more
21 difficult to understand him. He had
22 been in and out of hospitals and rehabs
23 the last few months of his life, and he
24 wanted out. We got in touch with
25 Dr. Grossman at the hospice at

1 May 10, 2012

2 Peninsula who told us exactly what to
3 do, and how to get him there. The
4 moment Nurse Rader met him as he was
5 laying on the stretcher coming in, all
6 the fear left his face. She bent over
7 him and said where have you been, I
8 have been waiting for you. For eight
9 days, not only did they take incredible
10 care of him, he never had another pain,
11 he never had another grimace, but they
12 took care of the family too. The
13 people of the Rockaways deserve that
14 right. Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Thank you.
16 Numbers 51 through 60, please. Also I
17 want to remind folks that we do have a
18 signing service if necessary. Please
19 make yourself known if you need the
20 service. Thank you.

21 MS. KRAUSE: Hi, I am Maureen
22 Krause. Hopefully, I can get through
23 this without crying. I have very sick
24 child, all right. I have a very sick
25 son. He has diabetes. When I moved

1 May 10, 2012
2 back here in 2009, I was so excited
3 that there was a pediatric
4 endocrinologist at Peninsula. As for
5 Mr. Muir, we went to the north pole
6 every that they had it, and it was only
7 through them that they had a pedes
8 endocrinologist on this peninsula. Now
9 there is none, none. My son's doctor
10 was giving us hints that the hospital
11 was in trouble. So we switched
12 doctors. Now I must travel all the way
13 to Columbia Presbyterian in Manhattan,
14 and now there is no pedes
15 endocrinologist on this peninsula. No
16 pedes nephrologist either. Over the
17 Easter holiday, over the Easter break,
18 my son became critically ill, and spent
19 27 hours in the ICU at Guisinger
20 Children's Hospital in Danville,
21 Pennsylvania, who already knew his
22 records from when he was hospitalized
23 there in 2008.
24 What would have happened to my diabetic
25 son if he was on this peninsula when he

1 May 10, 2012
2 became critically ill? He would have
3 had to have been brought to Saint
4 John's Hospital, and then transferred
5 out to Schneider's Childrens Hospital,
6 who have no idea what his records are
7 or what his medical history is. I love
8 my community and I moved back here to
9 take care of my mother, who fell down
10 and broke her hip. And I don't feel
11 safe here any more.

12 MR. MCLENDON: I have heard a
13 lot of passion here tonight, people who
14 are angry. Wayne, I definitely became
15 upstaged. That was pretty awesome,
16 actually. But what that woman said is
17 without a doubt couldn't be said
18 better. That should really show your
19 conscience and your humanity. I guess
20 Dr. Shah was really excited to go see
21 American Idol or something. I don't
22 know why he left. To each their own.
23 My name is Shawn McClendon. I am a
24 former employee of Peninsula. I
25 initially was not going to speak here

1 May 10, 2012
2 tonight, but I actually spoke to a
3 cousin of mine earlier, who is a
4 lieutenant in the big house in Far
5 Rockaway. He raised something to me
6 that maybe you guys want to make sure
7 that you know about it. How the flow
8 of this hospital and the closure has
9 already affected everything. He told
10 me that they are using the Fire House.
11 He works in the big house in Far
12 Rockaway, mind you, the largest fire
13 department that we have on the
14 peninsula. He told me already that
15 they are using the fire trucks to help
16 with patients because Saint John's is
17 on diversions. So with that occurring
18 now, without the summer even being
19 here. As anybody who lives in this
20 community knows, violence goes up in
21 the summer, drownings go up in the
22 summer. We are a beach community. The
23 ocean is over there. Go take a look at
24 it. The fact is that this is
25 completely ridiculous. Truly, I would

1 May 10, 2012

2 just ask you guys to take a look around
3 you. Take a look in the faces of the
4 people you see here. Look into their
5 eyes and let them know that the sand of
6 Rockaway is not going to be stained
7 with blood, because you are going to
8 let this happen. Don't let it happen.
9 Stand up, be the people you should be,
10 and fix the problem.

11 MR. BISHOP: My name is Matt
12 Bishop. I am founder and CEO of I GIVE
13 MORE. We are a technology start up
14 that helps non profit organizations
15 raise money. I want to read you a very
16 quick document. We, the people of the
17 United States, in order to form a more
18 perfect union, establish justice,
19 ensure domestic tranquility, provide
20 for the common defense, promote the
21 general welfare and secure the
22 blessings of liberty to ourselves and
23 our posterity, do ordain and establish
24 this Constitution of the United States
25 of America. This is the Constitution

1 May 10, 2012
2 of the United States of America. It is
3 our responsibility, it is the
4 responsibility of the federal
5 government, it is the responsibility of
6 the state government, the local
7 government to ensure the domestic
8 tranquility, promote the general
9 welfare and establish justice in this
10 country.
11 We are not doing it by closing this
12 hospital or the four other hospitals
13 that have ben closed over the last 10
14 years. So there is no tranquility in
15 this room. There is no tranquility.
16 It is our duty to make sure that this
17 hospital is reopened. This is a
18 community that has worked hard to
19 prevent it from closing, and it is a
20 community that is willing to work hard
21 to make sure that it reopens. So I am
22 here not just to tell you that it is
23 your duty to make this happen. I want
24 to offer a solution. My proposal is
25 that the State of New York provide

1 May 10, 2012
2 matching funds for money raised in this
3 community or any other community, five
4 to one, ten to one, in order to reopen
5 this hospital. We will do the work.
6 We will work here if you work with us
7 to make this happen. I am willing to
8 commit our technology. I get resources
9 free of service to help this community
10 raise money if there is interest in
11 willing to use it to raise money. To
12 use on line social media to raise money
13 for this community, free of services.
14 So I hope that -- where is the plan,
15 where is the plan to solve this
16 problem, not just here with what this
17 community wants, not just to hear us
18 after it has closed, but where is the
19 plan to address the issue? It is not
20 just that Queens has less than 1.6 beds
21 per thousand residents. The State of
22 New York has 3.2 beds per 1,000
23 residents. That is not just for Queens
24 County, it is not just for this
25 community. We need to do something

1 May 10, 2012
2 about it together, and we need your
3 help. We need the money, whatever it
4 takes to make this happen, and to
5 reopen this hospital. If anybody wants
6 to talk to me about raising money for
7 health care in this community, talk to
8 me afterwards.

9 MR. JODIS: My name is Jodis.
10 My friends, the person who has given
11 the speech, he told you his speech.
12 Because there is no word, there is no
13 solution of any problem. They don't
14 have a solution of every problem. I
15 don't know. I could not understand why
16 they could not solve this problem. The
17 problem clearly is not created, it is
18 only created by the administration.
19 There was no problem with the hospital.
20 There was no lack at the hospital, and
21 this hospital in 2011 was graded as a
22 zero infection hospital. Why did it
23 close? Closing only the lab on the
24 basis of the paperwork is not right.
25 They can see, where are the

1 May 10, 2012
2 deficiencies? Where are the patients
3 that died because of the tests? The
4 tests were perfectly done. Everything
5 was fine. I worked in the doctor's
6 office. They can see. I faced the
7 inspection two times in 2002 and 2003.
8 They appreciated my work on the
9 machine. They said they never found
10 such a control in all New York. We are
11 the persons who are doing the very
12 precision work. Even our proficiency
13 was never degraded. It was always 100
14 percent. It was right, and the studies
15 were done, the machine was serviced by
16 the company. The company's men came.
17 The maker of the machine said all
18 right, and all the studies were done.
19 How was that report not right? I was
20 very surprised on this. The same blood
21 on the vial to the labs, and the same
22 result was obtained from the other labs
23 without the reference lab. In
24 September last year, I read the three
25 E-mails to Governor Cuomo about the

1 May 10, 2012
2 hospital problem. What came of the
3 problem, I don't know why this problem
4 came again. So you are listening to
5 the speeches of everybody coming here.
6 The community needs this hospital.
7 Don't think I am telling for my job. I
8 am not telling for my job. I am
9 telling for the community, to serve the
10 community. So this is my request. You
11 have to think, you have to decide,
12 there is a solution. And really for
13 any solution we can lend a hand. We
14 can give them money also. We can
15 donate the money, we can contribute the
16 money. This is the money question. I
17 would request of the government that
18 the government should pump some of
19 theirs. To present their ideas with
20 every department to see the expenses.
21 It is the union and everybody, the
22 managers and other persons who are
23 utilizing the money, and there is no
24 recourse. So please, I want the
25 government involved in this case. I

1 May 10, 2012
2 will tell you Air India is an
3 international airline in India. They
4 are having the crisis of running the
5 international airline. The government
6 has given so many millions of dollars
7 to them. If the government is giving,
8 the government is also making money
9 from them. It is not like they are
10 giving back, but they are giving to
11 save the airline, to save the
12 passengers, to save the employees. You
13 see we are out of jobs. I have not had
14 a job from a half year. My son is
15 unemployed.

16 MR. MARRERO: Sir, please wrap up
17 your comments.

18 MR. JODIS: So please, this is
19 my request, that you think and decide.
20 Thank you very much.

21 MS. MCKAVAH: Good evening,
22 panel. My name is Queen McKavah, and I
23 am in the district, you New York City
24 is the first largest educational
25 district in America. District 27 where

1 May 10, 2012
2 Peninsula Hospital lies, is the second
3 largest in New York City. I am not
4 going to quote data. I am just going
5 to say a few things to you, okay. One,
6 I'm an idealist and I'm a visionary.
7 So I'm going to believe that
8 Commissioner Shah left because he got a
9 phone call that he has a meeting that
10 he has to review some new data to find
11 out how to help the situation. That's
12 what I think.
13 The second thing I'm going to tell you,
14 because my Senator and my Assemblywoman
15 is here. We just built a \$50 million
16 wing on one of the oldest building on
17 the peninsula, PS 42Q. State of the
18 art science lab, state of the art arts,
19 state of the arts music, Olympic gym.
20 As we speak, 300 people are sitting in
21 it, celebrating a tournament honoring a
22 young man that was assassinated. That
23 is what I call it when you are shot,
24 and you did nothing. Peninsula
25 Hospital represents in this community

1 May 10, 2012
2 another choice. I'm Black. I am told
3 to model the people on the west end.
4 The woman that came before me, I'm sure
5 she has a higher credit score than me,
6 she may even have certain
7 certifications I don't have. When I
8 listen to her cry because she did
9 everything the American dream told her
10 to do, and she is now scared to live,
11 which was her community before it was
12 mine, I have to ask you three consider.
13 I'm a panel leader in the DOH. I
14 believe in public hearings. I have
15 gone to them, I have spoken, and even
16 Chancellor Walker has reconsidered, and
17 not phased out our schools that he
18 thought he had to phase out. Get home
19 safely.

20 MR. GREENBERG: Mr. Cook, my
21 name is Steve Greenberg. I am past
22 member of the Peninsula Hospital Board
23 of Trustees. I'm sure you recall about
24 a year ago when it became apparent to
25 the Board of Directors that there was

1 May 10, 2012
2 something very fishy going on with
3 Medisys, our hospital president and the
4 Department of Health. We circled our
5 wagons, because you have been listening
6 to the testimony that these people have
7 been giving all day. I originally was
8 going to say things that everybody
9 said. There is no reason to repeat it.
10 But the Board of Directors of the
11 Hospital understood one thing. You
12 aren't just closing a hospital. You
13 are tearing the heart of the community
14 out. I always believed that the
15 Department of Health should be looking
16 out for the health and safety of the
17 people, and you are not looking out for
18 the health and safety of the people of
19 the Rockaway community. That is not
20 what is happening here. We were a
21 bunch of amateurs. We didn't know what
22 was going on, but we knew we had to
23 save this hospital. Mr. Zacheim, who
24 came in, Mr. and Mrs. Zacheim, who came
25 in to the revival and sat with us, and

1 May 10, 2012
2 did everything they could to
3 reestablish us. We went to court, we
4 went to do everything. We actually had
5 reached the point where the bankruptcy
6 court approved the plan of closure, of
7 bankruptcy. We thought we had turned
8 the corner. People in the community
9 were happy with what was going on at
10 the hospital. Then all of a sudden, we
11 got stabbed in the heart. I saw the
12 plan of the lab thing that you gave
13 out, the report on the lab. Time and
14 again it quoted something happened in
15 2008, it wasn't fixed. Something
16 happened in 2010, it wasn't fixed.
17 Therefore, we are closing. Time and
18 time again, that is what I saw. What I
19 don't understand, don't understand,
20 with any rational thought, I'm a
21 businessman, a rational thing was okay,
22 here we have something. People came
23 in. They are saving the hospital, they
24 are saving the hospital. Yes, the lab,
25 in fact, was deficient. I am not

1 May 10, 2012
2 denying that. Why didn't somebody come
3 in to make the lab efficient? I just
4 don't understand. That would seem to
5 me the cause of action that should have
6 been taken. But what is done is done.
7 I believe, I know there are people who
8 want to keep Peninsula Hospital open.
9 I still don't know whether or not the
10 license was pulled. Nobody seems to
11 know that, yes or no. But I have to
12 tell you as a person who has lived in
13 this community and served it in many
14 different ways, it is very, very
15 important. We are isolated. We have
16 the ocean. We have all kinds of things
17 that can go wrong here. Not only that,
18 last year, I was made a member of the
19 Mayor's Task Force, to promote business
20 and economy in the Rockaways. Last
21 summer, the Rockaways was getting a lot
22 of good press. There was a lot of good
23 stuff going on here. People were
24 coming down. It was a revitalization
25 of the community, and this just pulls

1 May 10, 2012

2 it away. I really think that if there
3 is a way to reestablish this hospital,
4 you should consider it and make that
5 your goal, not a goal to close the
6 hospital. Thank you.

7 MS. STAFFIS: Good evening. My
8 name is Fran Staffis. I am born in
9 Rockaway, as well as my husband. I am
10 one of 10, actually, born in Rockaway.
11 I want to thank you personally for
12 giving us the courtesy of staying and
13 listening, not taking breaks. I'm here
14 a short time. I haven't seen anybody
15 take breaks. I do think it is
16 inexcusable that the Commissioner did
17 leave. Everybody has a busy schedule
18 and they are trying to make it here
19 tonight, if they haven't done so today.
20 I am not going to repeat what everybody
21 else said. You have heard it a number
22 of times. I have just a couple of
23 concerns.
24 One, for the elderly, for the young and
25 for the middle aged, everybody has

1 May 10, 2012
2 emergencies. We had one in my own
3 family when my grandson had to be
4 brought to the hospital. He stopped
5 breathing twice. Thank God his father
6 was FDNY, and give him rescue breaths
7 until the ambulance came. He was taken
8 to the ED, and thank God everything is
9 good. But what do you do, every second
10 counts. What if he couldn't make it to
11 the ED? Then who is going to be
12 accountable to these people? The extra
13 time that it takes to get to the
14 emergency room, to get to the doctor,
15 where is the responsibility going to
16 lie? On whose head? I wouldn't want
17 that nightmare on me. The other thing
18 I am thinking of is with the hospital
19 gone, are the doctors going to stay.
20 Or are they going to leave to go to a
21 hospital near them? That is another
22 concern of mine. I asked my doctor the
23 other day what hospitals is she
24 affiliated with, and she told me, but
25 you are not going to make it if it is

1 May 10, 2012
2 an emergency. So I ask you please to
3 think of the children, of the elderly.
4 Even myself, God help me, I don't need
5 any medical care, but anything can
6 happen in any second, and that second
7 will count. I thank you again, and I
8 wish you a safe trip home. Just out of
9 curiosity, how far is the hospital to
10 your residence. So just give us the
11 same courtesy. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: We can ask
13 folks from 61 on if they want to come
14 up.

15 MS. RENNEHAM: Good evening. My
16 name is Joan Remmick Renneham. I am a
17 registered nurse currently working in
18 Peninsula Extended Care Facility on the
19 compound of Peninsula Hospital. I
20 started working down there in 1981 when
21 I was 20 years old as a student nurse.
22 I have been there for quite a while. I
23 have seen it all. My main question for
24 you is do you know. Do you know what
25 you have taken away from the community?

1 May 10, 2012
2 Did you know that there was an
3 audiology clinic housed in the extended
4 care facility that serviced every
5 nursing home in Rockaway, and
6 fabricated their hearing aids? Did you
7 know that there was a full blown dental
8 clinic that did surgery from pediatrics
9 to geriatrics? Did you know that we
10 had a pristine medical education
11 department that helped man every clinic
12 from endocrinology down to podiatry?
13 Who wouldn't want to be taken care of
14 by a doctor that was just learning and
15 wanted to do it right?
16 You took this away from the community.
17 You took jobs away from my fellow
18 nurses. Politically correct, I'm
19 supposed to say thank you for being
20 here? In all reality, thank you to the
21 present board that stuck by us. Mr.
22 Buren, Mr. Paucey. Thank you,
23 Mr. Zacheim for trying to get the
24 phoenix to rise from the ashes, and to
25 continue to try to help us. Thank you,

1 May 10, 2012
2 Lou, and thank you all my fellow
3 workers and the warriors. As for you
4 gentlemen, madame, I certainly hope you
5 sleep very well at night, because what
6 you have taken away from the community
7 is a nightmare. Good night.

8 MS. WAGNER: Good evening. My
9 name is Margaret Wagner. I am a
10 resident of Broad Channel, and I would
11 like to start off by saying that we
12 have some angels in the room tonight.
13 Without them, we wouldn't be here. Some
14 of them are the nurses, and of course
15 Dr. Wayne, and many others. But I have
16 formed a relationship with the nurse,
17 and unfortunately, she is not here
18 tonight. Her name is Mary Liz. She is
19 not here. She is the biggest leader
20 that I know of in this fight. She is
21 not a politician. Her name is Mary Liz
22 and she is in the hospital tonight
23 with chest pains. She is in South
24 Nassau, I believe. I don't know the
25 whole story of what happened, but that

1 May 10, 2012

2 is very disturbing to everyone. I just

3 want to personally thank all the nurses

4 for your hard fight. You have fought

5 harder than the electeds.

6 I am very disappointed that we have not

7 heard a response from the Governor. He

8 does not have a representative here.

9 This is a medical crisis, and I would

10 like it to would like it to go on

11 record that we would want a response

12 from the Governor before the 60 day

13 report comes out. Senator Malcolm

14 Smith, thank you for all your hard

15 work. You are his ears. Please get to

16 the Governor and have this hospital

17 reopened. The hospital has history.

18 104 years old. We can't afford to lose

19 this hospital. The hospital made it

20 through the Great Depression, but it

21 cannot make it through the corruption

22 of some politicians. The people want

23 the hospital to stay, so whatever the

24 Governor has to do. There is billions,

25 and I have seen it. Everyone has

1 May 10, 2012
2 computer access. There is billions of
3 dollars in grants, and a Heal Program.
4 We could go on and on but the money is
5 there. I don't like to say this, but
6 when my intuition tells me that you are
7 closing all these hospitals down, God
8 knows for what reason. We don't know
9 because no one is telling us. Closed
10 doors everywhere we look, everything is
11 shut down on us. Everyone works for
12 us. We are the taxpayers. Why do we
13 have to wait three months for answers?
14 The reporters that are in the room, I
15 would like them to ask for full
16 investigation from the District
17 Attorney's Office. There is fraud,
18 there is corruption. The Medisys CEO
19 was sentenced to I believe three years,
20 and some politicians are also going
21 away. So the corruption is there. I
22 hope nobody on the Department of Health
23 is being investigated. And I hope this
24 doesn't any further than it has already
25 been in the courts. It was Senator

1 May 10, 2012

2 Carl Kruger who just received seven

3 years, stated to the judge why am I

4 getting seven years, I am not as bad as

5 the others.

6 Please consider this. Be open with the

7 public. All we do, all we are asking

8 for is answers. If you have a plan, if

9 there is this new beautiful hospital

10 coming down to Far Rockaway for the

11 residents, to help all the new

12 residents, and it is a plan of Auburn

13 by the Sea, all we are asking is do it

14 quickly before people die. Let us know

15 what the plan is, and where the

16 Certificate of Operation is. If that

17 could come out before the report, the

18 60 days, if you could let us know if we

19 still have a fighting chance, Dr. Wayne

20 currently is working with an attorney

21 to raise funds to keep Peninsula open.

22 So with all the angels in the room, I

23 suggest you see Dr. Wayne. I think we

24 need \$8,000 more. We will post it

25 around town. He is suing, and I

1 May 10, 2012
2 believe in this fight, because if we
3 don't fight, we are not going to get
4 any answers from City Hall. Thank you.

5 MS. MALLON: Hi, good evening.
6 My name is Cathy Mallon. I entered
7 Rockaway almost 50 years ago. This
8 here is my great granddaughter, who I
9 have legal guardianship. Keana is her
10 name, and she has a seizure disorder.
11 I can't cover any pre-K because I have
12 to sit there for the two and a half
13 hours. She has to have a parent when
14 she goes to school. I don't drive. I
15 am solely dependent on Peninsula
16 Hospital. Dr. Shah left. He don't
17 want to hear what the people has to
18 say. I guess the saying goes, if you
19 can't stand the heat, get out of the
20 kitchen, so he is gone. Anyway, we
21 need Peninsula Hospital. I know you
22 have heard this over and over again.
23 But what you haven't heard from is
24 anybody mentioning Bloomberg. Where is
25 he? Why hasn't he come? We need

1 May 10, 2012

2 Bloomberg. He marches in the Saint
3 Patrick's Day parade down our streets
4 ever year. He wears his green, he tips
5 his hat. That to me is phony. We need
6 him down here to see what the hell is
7 going on with the closing of Peninsula
8 Hospital.

9 We also need a complete, like the lady
10 just said, investigation. By the time
11 it is all said and done, it may not
12 happen today, tomorrow. Maybe a year
13 from now, but you will see them coming
14 with the paddy wagon and a truck full
15 of handcuffs, and haul them all away,
16 including the Department of Health.
17 You have to , and you must for the sake
18 of the good kids like this that has to
19 walk around with asthma medicine, with
20 seizure medicine, or whatever for the
21 sake of their lives. Look at them.
22 You go home at night. You hug your
23 grandchildren. You are near a
24 hospital. You have health care, you
25 have everything you need. I don't

1 May 10, 2012
2 drive. I'm 66 years old. I got
3 custody of her. I got to look out for
4 her. I have eight grandchildren, and
5 who is there for me? Are you there?
6 Is Dr. Shah there? Did anybody take a
7 picture of the empty seat? That is
8 Dr. Shah. He is empty headed, and he
9 has an empty seat. Do what is right if
10 you don't want to wind up in Rikers or
11 where ever. Because eventually it is
12 going to happen, and I pray to the God
13 above that anybody that has the nerve
14 to close Peninsula Hospital will do
15 their time. We did not do this. The
16 Rockaway community did not create this
17 problem. The Rockaway community
18 depends on that hospital, each and
19 every one of us. Our lives are at
20 stake, and the lawsuits that are going
21 to be filed from the loss of life on
22 this island, surrounded by water and
23 two bridges is on your hands. Thank
24 you.

25 MS. RYAN: Hello. My name is

1 May 10, 2012
2 Alissa Ryan. I really have only just
3 something short to say. My aunt is, I
4 was born in Rockaway, my aunt was born
5 in Rockaway almost 100 years ago. She
6 is in the nursing home by Peninsula
7 now. Not only for her, yesterday, I
8 found myself having respiratory
9 problems. And from 10:30 in the
10 morning, I ended up going to Saint
11 John's until 6:30 in the evening, was
12 when I got out. Let me tell you, it
13 was insane, absolutely insane. I felt
14 guilty being there because I was
15 standing up. I could stand up, and
16 everybody else was on gurneys, almost.
17 All over, it was like wall to wall
18 people. When I came in in the morning,
19 it wasn't so bad when I left. Th
20 emergency room, the outside room was
21 packed. I felt bad for them, honestly.
22 When you have so many people like that,
23 and everybody is trying to do the best
24 that they can, they are going to make
25 mistakes too. I don't know if they

1 May 10, 2012
2 did, but it is easy to make mistakes
3 when you are so cramped. I really felt
4 bad for them. I just think whatever
5 you are doing, it is wrong. The people
6 in the nursing home, the elderly people
7 there that have to go to the hospital
8 next door, they probably don't even
9 know that it is not there any more. I
10 don't know why it is closed. It is
11 insane that it is closed. If it is a
12 lab thing, you just fix it that is all.
13 Remedy it and open it up. This is a
14 poor community. That is the deal, it's
15 poor. It's not rich, it's a poor
16 community and nobody gives a damn.
17 That's it. Thank you.

18 MS. QUINCERRA: Hi, my name is
19 Katie Quincerra. I was a nurse at
20 Peninsula Hospital, but I am now going
21 to speak for a chemotherapy nurse that
22 worked at Peninsula Hospital that could
23 not be here today, because she is
24 actually trying to find a job. I am
25 speaking for Janet DiPaulo. She was an

1 May 10, 2012
2 oncology certified nurse working in the
3 ambulatory chemotherapy infusion
4 center. Her job entailed working with
5 patients diagnosed with either cancer
6 or a hematological diagnosis. She
7 administered the chemotherapy, and up
8 until the day Peninsula Hospital
9 closed, was doing just that. At the
10 time of the closure of the hospital,
11 the cancer care of this peninsula from
12 Breezy Point to Far Rockaway has become
13 extremely limited. It barely exists.
14 Patients who were treated at Peninsula
15 Hospital must now travel to Nassau
16 County to get treatment, as the
17 oncologist who attended them at
18 Peninsula Hospital has his office and
19 infusion suite there. They can no
20 longer stay in their community and have
21 been displaced outside their city,
22 outside their community. Many of those
23 patients don't have transportation, and
24 some do not with their insurance, so
25 they have to take two buses to get

1 May 10, 2012
2 there. Is that fair, having a cancer
3 diagnosis and taking chemotherapy?
4 What does that feel like? Now they
5 take public transportation. I am sure
6 it is an exhausting day. I am sure
7 that there are more than a few moments
8 when the side effects of their
9 treatment kick in, and they are on a
10 bus. Does that seem fair? I feel or I
11 should say she feels that the patients
12 from that unit, and those that have
13 diagnosis yet to be made have been
14 abandoned. Not by the doctor who cares
15 for them, but by the system that shut
16 them out. How sad for those who needed
17 us the most, and we are not there for
18 them. Said maybe is the wrong word.
19 It is actually tragic.

20 MR. HANNON: Good evening. My
21 name is Tom Hannon, and I am here for
22 the main reason is to share something
23 with you that possibly you don't know,
24 or the Commissioner who had to go
25 somewhere doesn't know, or the

1 May 10, 2012
2 Governor, Andrew Cuomo. I know his
3 mother, Matilda. She is a lovely lady,
4 and she likes hospitals all over the
5 place. She wants to see people live so
6 they can vote for Andrew. That is
7 true. The thing is I am an ombudsman,
8 New York State trained, with mental
9 hospital long term care and rehab right
10 next to the building that has an
11 inexpensive lock on it in the locked
12 positron. I learned a lot. I
13 volunteer. I don't get paid, but when
14 somebody up in their nineties who looks
15 out a window and cries and says I have
16 children all over the country and I
17 have grandchildren, Mr. Hannon, and
18 none of them come to see me, is love
19 dead, is common sense dead? The tears
20 flow, and I walk away from that woman
21 and that man who belongs to what they
22 call the great generation, God bless
23 them, they are, with wisdom. You can't
24 put wisdom in an envelope in the form
25 of cash. You can't put wisdom in an

1 May 10, 2012
2 envelope with a W2 form or a 1040. I
3 have learned a lot in my five years
4 over here.
5 I wasn't going to come tonight, but I
6 was on the Belt Parkway trying to get
7 to Cross Bay Boulevard last night
8 about 4:30. There was an ambulance and
9 a fire engine trying to come too. They
10 couldn't get through. Ambulance
11 transportation, my friends, is
12 obsolete. Think about it. The roads
13 are too. That would be a good way to
14 put people back to work. Have them
15 build two more lanes on each highway
16 immediately, and there are too many
17 cars. It is critical that we think of
18 a different way. I have thought. Many
19 a day I stay up on the fourth floor.
20 They have Facing the Bay, they call it
21 bay, four bay, three bay, two bay and
22 ocean, four ocean, three ocean, two
23 ocean. I look out the window and I see
24 these ships, these vessels coming in to
25 the greatest harbor in the world, New

1 May 10, 2012
2 York Harbor. My cousin Joe just
3 retired as harbor master. Not many
4 people know about that job. There are
5 military ships out there. I worked for
6 Jimmy Carter, God bless him, the former
7 President. He was a submarine
8 commander. Some of those subs stay out
9 there for almost a year under the
10 water. You can't see them, but thank
11 God they are there. They keep the
12 peace. There is freighters, there is
13 commercial vessels, there is tankers
14 coming in and out. There is also
15 passenger vessels, cruise lines coming
16 out and coming in, right by the door of
17 Peninsula Hospital that is closed up
18 temporarily. My cousin Joe told me
19 when I called him the other night,
20 Tommy, you are telling me there is a
21 heliport in the back of Peninsula
22 General Hospital? I said yes, Mike
23 Bloomberg comes in there a few times
24 with his chopper, with the police
25 chopper when he is late for the parade

1 May 10, 2012
2 or whatever. Good man, this lady is
3 right, get him down here. He has got
4 so many things on his plate, he doesn't
5 know what's going on. So the thing is
6 we could have a chopper, if someone is
7 out on a cruise line and takes a heart
8 attack, they call the hospital,
9 Peninsula, or fly out a chopper, get
10 the person, bring them back, save their
11 life, okay. The same thing, my
12 neighbor across the street from me,
13 Jimmy Leahey, he is the boss, the
14 manager of John Fitzgerald Kennedy
15 Airport. I spoke to him. What does
16 that say? Don't believe everything you
17 read. This will give the extra funds
18 to the hospital. We can do it. Aer
19 Lingus, Air Italia, Israeli Airlines,
20 all the airlines will chip in. We will
21 be their hospital. We will fly them
22 over here. That is 100,000 people;
23 employees, passengers walking around
24 Kennedy every day. We will fly them in
25 the chopper, because ambulance

1 May 10, 2012
2 transportation is obsolete. Please,
3 God, get that lock off.

4 MR. KAZNER: Before I start,
5 does anybody have any Lysol so I can
6 sanitize the mic? I don't want to
7 catch any germs, and not have a
8 hospital to go. No offense to the
9 previous speakers. I will take my
10 chances. I have a doctor over here
11 to help me out. Good evening,
12 everybody. My name is Lannie Kazner.
13 I have been a 35 year resident, 30 year
14 resident, 35 year resident here on th
15 west end. And like I said, I am afraid
16 of possibly getting ill, and not having
17 a hospital to go to. I know a little
18 bit about government, since I work for
19 the City of New York for over 30 years,
20 and I know how inefficiently they do
21 operate. I just addressed the Water
22 Board not too long ago, and their panel
23 or chair people or whatever you want it
24 call them, were a little less stoic
25 than the three of you are. I feel like

1 May 10, 2012

2 I'm maybe talking to mannequins. I

3 would dismiss all three of you and just

4 keep the stenographer, and he would be

5 a better audience, I think.

6 Anyway, I sort of have an affiliation

7 with Saint John's, as my wife, who is a

8 life long resident of Rockaway works

9 there for I'm not even sure how long,

10 but over 20 years. As you see, I am

11 wearing NAMY shirt. I just did the

12 walk for them, a three and a half mile

13 walk last Saturday for the cause, and

14 raised over \$600 for them. So I am

15 kind of happy I did that. I have been

16 retired for six years, and you know, I

17 am enjoying Rockaway. But again,

18 without a hospital here, my thoughts

19 have changed a little bit, and I was

20 considering moving. But of course my

21 wife, being I have a life long

22 resident, believe me, she will stay

23 here and I will have to go. So I don't

24 think that is an option any more. I'm

25 a little nervous. I'm a better writer

1 May 10, 2012
2 than I am a speaker. But the whole
3 background about my relationship with
4 Rockaway, my parents actually met here
5 many, many years ago. My mother lived
6 upstairs. My father's family lived
7 downstairs, and back in those days,
8 they had ice boxes. Of course my
9 mother had the job to take the water
10 tray out of the ice box, and she
11 neglected to do that. There was a leak
12 downstairs, so my grandmother sent my
13 father up, and voila, that is how they
14 met. So we came here every summer and
15 enjoyed the beach. So I have sort of
16 been a life long resident, even though
17 it was part time of Rockaway for a long
18 time. I love living here, I love the
19 beach, but I don't like the situation
20 without a hospital nearby. Saint
21 John's alone is not the answer. It is
22 too far away. It is 20 minutes by car
23 from my home, and that is a little too
24 far, I think. I just had another
25 question about the Commissioner. How

1 May 10, 2012
2 did he leave here? Did he go by limo,
3 or did he take an ambulance back to
4 where he came from? A helicopter?
5 Taxpayer's money. Again, I was
6 thinking about getting a new job, so I
7 just wanted to ask you people up here,
8 before I go, who do I have to pay off
9 to get one of your cushy jobs? Thank
10 you very much, everyone.

11 MS. ROCHFORD: Hello, my name is
12 Pat Rochford. I worked all day, so I'm
13 tired. I won't be long. I want to
14 talk about transparency, I want to talk
15 about how on a regular basis in the
16 Daily News and other newspapers around
17 town, you hear about hospital
18 administrators making millions and
19 millions of dollars. The Cohen
20 brothers were running YAI. They made
21 millions of dollars, and apartments. I
22 want to say is as a taxpayer, all I
23 know is you're getting a raise year.
24 This year, it's this tax, this time it
25 is water taxes. Every time you are

1 May 10, 2012
2 turning around, we are getting a raise
3 in Rockaway, we are getting a tax, we
4 are getting a tax for this, we are
5 paying higher tolls. All we do is
6 raise money and we lose services. Our
7 transportation is horrendous. To count
8 on a helicopter, and helicopter moving
9 people in and out doesn't work in bad
10 weather when more accidents would have
11 happened. It works if you are the
12 Governor of New Jersey and you have a
13 horrendous accident. Relying on
14 getting somewhere, that works when you
15 are the Governor of New Jersey, but it
16 doesn't work for us tax payers. Our
17 people who work all day to come here to
18 pay higher and higher taxes, just to be
19 witness to the fraud that goes in the
20 administration. I have to tell you I
21 am just so tired of it. When I heard
22 that four people who were the
23 administrators for Saint Vincent
24 Hospital paid themselves over \$1
25 million, and their perk was that they

1 May 10, 2012
2 had a helicopter to get out to the
3 Hamptons, you know.
4 I have to talk from my personal
5 experience. I work in Maimonides. I
6 want to tell you our ER used to see 100
7 people in 2009 a day. Our ER in 2010
8 saw 200 people a day. Our ER sees 300
9 people a day in the ER, and we don't
10 get any Berger Commission money. We
11 don't any money to pick up the slack.
12 As we talk about closing Downstate, as
13 we talk about Kingsbrook Jewish is on
14 life support, and that is what you
15 read. Where is it that there is any
16 responsibility to the people of New
17 York City other than we are raising
18 your tax in a different form? Today it
19 is the toll, tomorrow it is the water
20 tax. Then it is the income tax. It
21 just has to stop somewhere. I would
22 like you to investigate in Peninsula
23 Hospital, where was the money. What
24 line did they take the money out to
25 bribe Kruger? What line did they cover

1 May 10, 2012
2 that under? We all know that happened,
3 and he is going to jail, but where is
4 the responsibility of the people that
5 we send, or the people that get left
6 because Dr. Shah didn't think Rockaway
7 was important? But where is the
8 responsibility to say we are
9 investigating this, we are going to
10 find out, we are going to put a cap on
11 this? They certainly put a cap on my
12 salary. They certainly do, and that is
13 what I have to say as a taxpayer. I am
14 disgusted. When you hear of this abuse
15 over and over, it's in Kingsboro, \$4
16 million, Saint Vincent's, they have the
17 helicopter. Here we are bribing
18 Kruger. But you know what happened to
19 Mr. Levine. He got a nice job in
20 Flushing Hospital. Thank you.
21 Goodbye.

22 MS. PRAWZINSKI: Hi. My name is
23 Phyllis Prawzinski, and I'm a former
24 director of the emergency room at
25 Peninsula Hospital. Just like the

1 May 10, 2012
2 speaker previous to me who said he is
3 kind of here under false pretenses,
4 because he wasn't advocating for
5 Peninsula, he was advocating for the
6 Rockaways, I feel the same way, because
7 I understand that in my heart, this is
8 a made decision. I appreciate that you
9 have come to listen to how you have
10 affected peoples' lives, and you have
11 affected the health care. But I for
12 one do not believe for a moment that
13 this will change. But I have to come
14 address all you people who I have
15 known. I am a relative newcomer. I
16 have only been here 22 years. I know
17 that there are so many people who have
18 much longer and much more prestigious
19 histories at Peninsula. I was there in
20 the glory days when we were doing well,
21 where people were actually stealing
22 from us, and we didn't even notice
23 because we had money, I'm going way
24 back. But to the point now where 20
25 years forward, we got into big trouble.

1 May 10, 2012

2 We had a reprieve, we thought for a

3 minute or two, with Medisys for about a

4 day or two. I truly believe they

5 wanted to make us successful, because I

6 didn't think that anybody invested a

7 business to just leach them out. But

8 over the year, year and a half that we

9 were affiliated with them, it became

10 increasingly evident we had to buy from

11 them at exorbitant cost. We weren't

12 getting the things that we needed to

13 run the hospital. By the summer of

14 last year, we were hurting. We

15 couldn't get supplies from creditors.

16 Nobody would extend us credit, and we

17 were going to close, and we made a

18 desperate appeal. We weren't going to

19 just close. We were going to go down

20 as that hospital, that hospital that

21 didn't provide great care, that had

22 deteriorated over time.

23 In August of 2011, a company stepped in

24 and said we need health care and

25 Rockaway, and we will invest in your

1 May 10, 2012
2 community and make this the best it can
3 be. That was their motto from the day
4 they came in. In the five months that
5 we were affiliated with this
6 organization and these people, they
7 elevated our practice that we went out
8 on a white horse. When they walked in
9 on February 23rd and said we are
10 closing the hospital because of the
11 lab, I said oh, no, we are winning. We
12 will do whatever it takes to fix that
13 lab and make it the best. They were
14 only there five months. They had to
15 undo literally two years of leaching of
16 resources. Two years, and in five
17 months, there is not a person in this
18 room that didn't see better equipment,
19 more medications, more staff. If it
20 was reasonable, they did it. When they
21 came in and we did all this work, and
22 they allowed this very generous company
23 to probably throw another \$100,000,
24 \$200,000 at a lab that they were never
25 even going to come in and look at, the

1 May 10, 2012
2 should have just been honest with us
3 from February 23rd and said New York
4 State has a \$35 billion budget deficit
5 involving health care. Isn't it funny
6 how on April 2, 2012, we were already
7 in the midst of closing, so I am sure
8 nobody read it in the paper, New York
9 State managed to close that down. I am
10 not saying that Peninsula Hospital was
11 worth \$35 billion. But we were one of
12 the hospitals that closing us, and it
13 was about the fact that our patient
14 population draws the most resources out
15 of the State of New York. We are one
16 of those portals of entry into health
17 care that causes the state to lose
18 money every day. It wasn't about how
19 successful we were going to be, because
20 we were going to run a successful
21 hospital, because had a successful
22 company behind us. It was about the
23 fact that they no longer wanted to foot
24 our Medicaid bills, Medicare bills,
25 because that is state funded. Also the

1 May 10, 2012
2 people that don't have any insurance
3 who we see also. So I just want to
4 thank everybody for the great job they
5 did after supporting this hospital and
6 knowing that it hurts so much more this
7 time, because we were running.

8 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Numbers 71
9 through 80, please.

10 UNANNOUNCED SPEAKER: Hi, Rick.
11 Well, there you have it. You heard
12 from the Rockaway community. You heard
13 sad stories, you heard people living
14 here for 40, 50 years. But I am very
15 confused about something. We go back,
16 maybe eight, nine months. When Medisys
17 pulled out of Peninsula, I was on the
18 phone many times with Rick Cook. We
19 worked very diligently, the Board
20 Members and myself. The courts then
21 deemed they gave us a trustee. You
22 know the story, and the fabulous five
23 was formed. I live in Rockaway for
24 the past 22 years, but I was born in
25 Brooklyn. We have like a little sense

1 May 10, 2012
2 of something that doesn't smell right.
3 I say that because for the eight months
4 that we worked, we came back. We were
5 fortunate to find the Revival Group.
6 They were a white knight. In the four
7 months, they came back, and we had
8 \$33,000 in the black, coming back \$60
9 million. It is very strange that six
10 days, and I will say it again, it was
11 six days before we came out of
12 bankruptcy. Six days that we had a
13 forensic inspection from the state.
14 It doesn't smell right. So I asked
15 you, I said how could this be. This is
16 the only hospital that I know of that
17 that has ever been closed because of a
18 laboratory. If you get a flat tire on
19 a car, you don't sell the car. You fix
20 the flat. We fixed the flat. We
21 worked diligently. These people here
22 worked diligently day and night to get
23 that lab up and running. Guess what?
24 Nobody came to the party. We put in
25 thousands of dollars to get this lab

1 May 10, 2012
2 up. We refurbished the entire thing.
3 We went to court. The Fab Five went to
4 court, and we represented Nassau
5 Hospital. The trustee, Ms. Jones, we
6 sat with her. They made some demands,
7 we met the demands. They needed money,
8 we got money, but yet it wasn't
9 accepted. They didn't like where the
10 money was coming from. I think there
11 is something wrong with that. All the
12 other hospitals that were closing in
13 New York State were due to money, not
14 laboratories. We had the finances, we
15 had the wherewith all. It doesn't sit
16 right, Rick. So what I asked the
17 Commissioner, Mr. Commissioner, please
18 explain to me how with six days to go,
19 we get an inspection and they find
20 dirty gloves on the floor or whatever,
21 silly things. Refrigerators weren't up
22 to snuff. It was warm in the lab.
23 That is dangerous. It was off two
24 degrees. Why six days before us
25 exiting bankruptcy do we get this

1 May 10, 2012
2 inspection. Was it maybe that DOH
3 didn't expect us to keep the hospital
4 open for eight months? They are not
5 accepting that part. I have got to
6 bring this report out. I saw the card
7 come up. You say we are going to get a
8 response in 60 days. They are selling
9 off the hospital. They are getting
10 \$2,000,000 from all the assets that may
11 be inside the hospital. The RFP is
12 going to come before the 60 days, so we
13 are going to get a report when we don't
14 have a hospital any more. So if you
15 may, I would appreciate some rapid
16 response to our questions. I am sure
17 you heard all that you had to hear. I
18 saved myself for the last. Good luck.

19 MS. SMALLWOOD: Good evening,
20 all. Good evening, everyone. How are
21 you? My name is Alexis Smallwood, and
22 I am speaking as a mommy, as a worker
23 who worked in the health field, and it
24 is crucial that you keep Peninsula
25 open. My son is an asthmatic, and I

1 May 10, 2012
2 can't wait to get to Saint John's to
3 get to him. Not only that, it is small
4 capacity. Our doctor is a wonderful
5 doctor, and I'm pretty sure if I look
6 around this room, I can spot a
7 Peninsula worker. I just saw a
8 receptionist. I'm telling you her
9 right there, every time I go in there,
10 she is so pleasant to me. I'm telling
11 you, if you overload Saint John's
12 workers, I'm telling you patient care
13 is going to go down. You think people
14 are tired now and stressed and can't
15 take the workload. I know that's a
16 fact because I used to be a worker at
17 New York Hospital in Queens. I mean
18 when I say the beds are like this, and
19 the patients are complaining, and
20 you're telling them listen, honey,
21 we're trying to do the best that we
22 can, but you have got to talk to them
23 up there who is working that money and
24 that in Albany and everywhere else who
25 is representing us, and the

1 May 10, 2012
2 pharmaceutical companies.
3 Not only that, AJ's leg almost fell off
4 because they're building over there,
5 and all those mosquitoes and the bugs
6 came up and bit my baby. He's like
7 blistered up, and he couldn't walk any
8 more. He was like this. Go upstairs,
9 my baby is treated like a king, a king,
10 and I tell everybody all the time, you
11 better take them vitamins, and you
12 better not jump off that bed, because
13 if you hurt yourself, listen, I don't
14 want to go to Saint John's. It's hot,
15 listen, do not close Peninsula down. I
16 know what it is to work in the health
17 care field, and doctors and nurses,
18 they work very hard to take care of
19 their patients. I know somebody who
20 worked at Peninsula, and right now,
21 she's on welfare being treated like
22 crap at the back to work program. She
23 don't want to be there. She wants to
24 be at work.

25 MR. STEUBEN: Good evening.

1 May 10, 2012
2 Thank you. I would like to thank
3 everyone who has been here for three to
4 four hours. I just got here from work.
5 My name is Peter Steuben. I am a
6 resident on Beach 123. I did a little
7 research and checked out the Berger
8 Commission of 2006, and I apologize
9 because it has probably been discussed
10 all afternoon. But he was commissioned
11 along with David Sanders from the State
12 of New York to review the hospital
13 situation in the state, and come up
14 with their conclusions as MDs and
15 consultants and experts. I would like
16 to read just one or two paragraphs, and
17 then get to their position on Rockaway,
18 because they covered the entire State
19 of New York. Some of their
20 recommendations were for Rockaway. Our
21 health care system is broken and needs
22 repair. It is not too late to
23 structure the care delivery system.
24 Unless we act decisively, again, this
25 report was presented to the State

1 May 10, 2012
2 Legislature as well as to the Governor.
3 Further facility closures and
4 bankruptcies are almost certain to
5 occur. Moreover the hospitals that
6 close due to market forces alone may be
7 the ones most critical to preserving
8 access. These recommendations will
9 help to avoid future calamities that
10 would further destabilize the system
11 and compromise patient care. That was
12 presented to the State Legislature and
13 the Governor in November of 2006. That
14 is six years ago. A fundamental driver
15 of the crisis in the health care
16 delivery system is excess capacity.
17 The state wide hospital occupancy rate
18 has fallen from 82 percent of certified
19 beds to 65 percent in 2004, a decrease
20 of 18 percent. On a staff bed basis,
21 approximately one quarter of hospital
22 beds are currently unoccupied. Here is
23 the summary. Again, forgive me for
24 reading. Per statutory obligation, the
25 commission makes the following

1 May 10, 2012
2 recommendations, to right size and
3 reconfigure health care in each region
4 of the state. The recommendations
5 apply equitably across all regions.
6 They address 57 hospitals, or one
7 quarter of all hospitals.
8 Collectively, the recommendations will
9 reduce inpatient capacity by
10 approximately 4,000 beds, or seven
11 percent. Twice as many nursing homes
12 will be downsized as closed. In
13 addition, long term care
14 recommendations will create more than
15 1,000 new non institutional slots.
16 Again, specifically for Rockaway,
17 Peninsula Hospital should downsize by
18 approximately 99 beds, and Saint John's
19 Episcopal should downsize by
20 approximately 81 beds. Contingent upon
21 financing, the two facilities should
22 merge and rebuild a single facility
23 with approximately 400 beds. That
24 sounds imminently rational to me, has
25 not been implemented. I am sure the

1 May 10, 2012
2 two hospitals discussed it, but their
3 egos on both sides, on both staffs,
4 among both directors and boards. But
5 this is one peninsula of 100,000
6 people. One major facility on the
7 peninsula should be something that the
8 state should approach to provide some
9 sort of a structure so this could
10 happen. Thank you very much.

11 MS. PALADINO: Good evening. My
12 name is Laurie Paladino. I am the
13 administrator at Ocean Promenade Center
14 for Nursing and Rehab. I am here
15 tonight to speak on behalf of 120
16 people that can't speak for themselves,
17 the elderly. We are a subacute and
18 long term care facility. I am sure
19 most people automatically assume that I
20 am here to speak because I am going to
21 down with my census, and my beds won't
22 be filled, but that is not the case.
23 My beds are still filled. I am
24 reaching out to Brooklyn, I am taking
25 patients from Jamaica Hospital, Coney

1 May 10, 2012
2 Island, Queens, Lutheran, Interfaith.
3 We started some great programs there
4 that unfortunately we won't be able to
5 offer people if they are being shipped
6 off of the island, off of the
7 peninsula. The 120 residents that live
8 there are not well. Otherwise, they
9 wouldn't be there. They have no place
10 to go except for Saint John's. If
11 Saint John's is on diversion, and I
12 know that they have commented that they
13 haven't been on diversion. But
14 somehow, I send a patient out to Saint
15 John's, and the next day I am getting a
16 call, they are in Jamaica, Brookdale,
17 somewhere else. So I don't know how
18 they got there if they weren't on
19 diversion. So they are getting there
20 somehow.
21 The island needs to have another
22 hospital. Not just for my patients. I
23 am here to also speak for the 283
24 employees that we have, most of them
25 living in the Rockaways. If they get

1 May 10, 2012

2 hurt, they have got no where to take
3 their family members, their children,
4 their elderly parents. My director of
5 nursing's son was hurt recently in a
6 rugby accident, and she ended up out in
7 Long Island Jewish. So the need for
8 the hospital is there, and I am sure
9 that the Department of Health is very
10 much aware of that. It is how are we
11 going to get it back that has to be
12 worked out. But there is that great
13 need. These patients need long term
14 care, but when they are acutely ill,
15 they need an acute care hospital.
16 Right now, I have no where to send my
17 patients. So I need a place to send
18 them. Please help me. Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Thank you
20 very much. I just want to say that
21 this is very important. We have heard,
22 we have learned. We are going to go
23 back now to Albany and take a look at
24 what we have learned today. I just
25 make that commitment to everyone in

1 May 10, 2012
2 this room, and the folks that have been
3 here, and had to leave. We do make
4 that commitment, that I am going to
5 take this very seriously. Thank you
6 very much for participating in this
7 forum.

8 (TIME NOTED: 7:00 P.M.)

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CERTIFICATION

I, Robert J. Pollack, a Notary
Public in and for the State of New
York, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing is a true and
accurate transcript of my stenographic
notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my hand this 24th day of
May 2012.

ROBERT J. POLLACK