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

PRESENT:
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

PRECISE COURT REPORTING
(516) 747-9393 (718) 343-7227 (212) 581-2570
SPEAKERS:

ELISA HINKIN, Nurse
MARY CAMPA, Nurse
DR. SETH GUTTERMAN, President,
   Peoples Choice Hospital
JOAN SOMMERMEIR, Labor Representative,
   New York State Nurses Association
BERNIE FOYER, Resident
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER
SUSAN GREEN, former Peninsula employee
DANIEL ROSILLO, Resident
RITA CLOSKY, former Peninsula employee
ANNETTE CLARK, Resident
JOSEPH LYNCH, Resident
PAUL SCHUBERT, Community activist
MICHELLE LEBOW, former Peninsula employee
RICHARD BERGER, semi-retired EMT
BARBARA LARKIN, Resident
THE HONORABLE MALCOLM SMITH, State Senator
THE HONORABLE SHIRLEY HUNTLEY, State Senator
LEONA STERN, Resident
PETER SALMON, Resident
CLAIRE THOMPSON, RN
PHYLLIS REDWICK, Resident
SPEAKERS: (Continued.)

THE HONORABLE MICHELLE TITUS, Assemblywoman

DR. EDWARD WILLIAMS, President,
    Far Rockaway NAACP

YVETTE GLASGOW, former President,
    Far Rockaway NAACP

ROBERT CAPANO, District Director
    for Congressman Bob Turner

ELIZABETH SULIK, former Peninsula employee

LAURA RADER, former Peninsula employee

HARVEY RUDNICK, Resident

PAULA MACELLI, representing
    Borough President Helen Marshall

KEVIN HOMISH, former Peninsula employee

KATHLEEN LAWLESS, former Peninsula employee

THE HONORABLE ERIC ULRICH,
    Member of City Council

MARNIE RYAN, Resident

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

LOUIS DISALVIO, 23rd Assembly
    District Leader

MARILEE KAUFMAN, Resident

THE HONORABLE PHILIP GOLDFEDER, Assemblyman

LAURA HOPKINS, Resident
SPEAKERS: (Continued.)

FELICIA JOHNSON, Resident
FLOYD SMITH, Executive Director,
    Concerned Citizens of Rockaway
ANNETTE IRVIN, former chaplain,
    Peninsula Hospital
ANNIE WARDEN, Resident
NORMAN SILVERMAN, Resident
CHRISTINE MCGRATH, Resident
DR. WAYNE DODAKIAN, former
    Peninsula employee
LILLIAN BENJAMIN, Resident
MAUREEN KRAUSE, Resident
SHAWN MCLENDON, Former Peninsula employee
MATT BISHOP, CEO, I GIVE MORE.
MR. JODIS, Resident
QUEEN MCKAVAH, Resident
STEVEN GREENBERG, Past member,
    Peninsula Board of Trustees
FRAN STAFFIS, Resident
JOAN RENNEHAM, Registered Nurse,
    Peninsula Extended Care Facility
MARGARET WAGNER, Resident
CATHY MALLON, Resident
SPEAKERS: (Continued.)

ALISSA RYAN, Resident
KATIE QUINCERRA, former Peninsula employee
TOM HANNON, Resident
LANNIE KAZNER, Resident
PAT ROCHFORD, Resident
PHYLLIS PRAWZINSKI, Former Peninsula employee
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER
ALEXIS SMALLWOOD, Resident
PETER STEUBEN, Resident
LAURIE PALADINO, Administrator,
Ocean Promenade Center for Nursing and Rehab
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MS. JOHNSON: Good afternoon. I would like to take care of some housekeeping information. Before I do that, I want to introduce myself. Celeste Johnson, State Health Department. With us here at the table are Commissioner Nirav Shah, Jim Clancy from the Government Affairs Department, and from the Department of Health, Rick Cook, who runs the Office of Health Systems Management.

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

There are staff members here identified by badges if you need any
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questions answered. For housekeeping purposes, the men's room is on the bottom floor. The ladies room is on the top floor. We thank you.

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

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

It is going to be a long day. We want to respect everyone's time. If you have comments that you have heard before, please limit your comments so that more can speak. We want to try to get as many folks as possible to be able to air their views, and so that we
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get a full picture. Thank you so much.

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

According to Public Health Law 2801G.3, the forum presented today is in violation of said law. New York State Department of Health did not publically post to its web site the location of the public forum until the afternoon, I'm a little nervous, excuse me, until the afternoon of May 4th, only six days prior to this required meeting. According to said law, a minimum of 10 days notice is to be given. As you know, partial compliance of the law is unacceptable. Evidence of such violation is hereby submitted as H1.
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Boy, am I nervous. Thank you. Could I sit? I think it is your star power, since I know of your names intimately for so many years. Mr. Cook, especially.

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

The question of her experience as a sole administrator, sole governing authority of a hospital was not considered by the Department at any time. Her sole health care background
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is as a member of the Board of Directors of the Organization for Autism Research since 2005. Ms. Jones lacks both the experience and education regarding governing and operating a hospital. I submit such evidence labeled H2.

Further, Ms. Jones submitted a preliminary, incomplete and a knowingly unacceptable plan of correction to the Department for review. Ms. Jones is an expert in the protection of assets on behalf of the creditors in cases of bankruptcy. To the disservice of the community, she has protected those creditors. To the disservice of the community, she single handedly, through the authorization of New York State Department of Health, stopped the process of correcting the deficiencies regarding the lab services, and surrendered the hospital's operating certificate to the state. This afternoon at 1:15 p.m., a Nassau County
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ambulance could not go to Saint John's Episcopal Hospital because it was not available, and was asking the 911 operator, because I live in Nassau County, for permission to go to Peninsula Hospital. The 911 operator had to inform the ambulance that Peninsula is closed.

Now the person could not go to Long Beach for whatever reason. That was also mentioned. Finally, the ambulance was diverted to Jamaica Hospital. The Rockaways need a second emergency room on the peninsula. By possibly adding 17 more beds at Saint John's emergency room, it is not only going to increase travel time for the residents from Breezy, Fort Tilden, Neponset, Belle Harbor, Broad Channel, Rockaway Park and Rockaway Beach, adding 17 more beds at Saint John's does not change the fact that they cannot physically handle more than one emergency 911 ambulance in their
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ambulance bay now. There is no turn around, there is no physical area from which to expand those bays.

MS. CAMPA: Hi. My name is Mary Campa. I was a nurse at Peninsula Hospital up until February of this year, and now I work at the nursing home. On or about March 18th, I was taking care of a 73 year old female. I will call her Miss M. I know that she was having a change of mental status. She was leaning towards one side, and she was unable to speak. She was aphasic. We called an ambulance, and it took her an hour and a half to get there. When the ambulance came, they told us they would have to take her to Jamaica Hospital, because Saint John's was on diversion. They apologized for the delay because the ambulances were all backed up because of the diversions. In a case where a patient has a stoke, every second is crucial. Once again, we have normal transport of
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these patients ourselves over to
Peninsula emergency room, a designated
stroke center, but that was closed down
by New York State DOH. Yet, that is
another example of how seriously this
compromises patient care.

On or about March 9, 2012, a
female approximately 60 years old that
I will call Miss D went into
respiratory distress and became
unresponsive. Since Peninsula's ER was
on diversion, per DOH ruling, we were
forced to call 911, and that is when we
initiated CPR on this patient. While
waiting for the ambulance to arrive,
the patient subsequently died. We did
everything right. Prior to closing the
Peninsula Hospital, we would transport
the patient over to the emergency room,
which is physically connected to the
nursing home, and it would only take
minutes to run this patient over for
life saving treatment. I know we are
not the only nursing home that goes
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through this. There are many nursing
homes in Far Rockaway. Listed below
are the bed capacities in Far Rockaway.
There are approximately 16 nursing
homes that I have, and there are 3,393
nursing home beds. In assisted living
facilities, I have approximately 13.
That is 1,796 beds. A total of 5,186
nursing home and assisted living beds
in Far Rockaway. If at any time these
facilities are near or at their
capacity, where are these patients to
go for urgent care?

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

MS. JOHNSON: Before the next
speaker comes on, I just want to let
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you know that there are signers here for those who are impaired.

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

Basically, our company has three divisions. We have a financing arm, we have a senior management arm of doctors and people who have worked on the front lines as well as at the senior management. We have the technology on line where we can make the hospital paperless in six months of going live.
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In other words delivering 21st century to technology community hospitals. Right now, obviously, you are not unfamiliar with this. Community hospitals all around the country are closing. Any community hospital in a financially distressed area is closing because they cannot manage the day to day needs of quality care for the 21st century, because they are dealing with 20th century financing, 20th century management and 20th century technology. What we have had a lot of experience with in each arm of our company is turning around financially distressed hospitals with good financing models. In other words, low interest rates, with senior managers that actually have been on the front lines. We have many from the New York area that are interested in participating in this program. Then we actually own OMC certified software by CMS to put the entire hospital, doctors
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offices, health agencies and even
patient's homes on one computer system.
One patient, one chart and one
database. We are here to help you if
you want to do this. We are a boutique
company. I want there to be
transparency. My company has been very
successful in all three arms; in the
financing arm, in the senior management
arm, and in putting hospitals, making
them paperless with 21 century
technology certified by the OMC.

This would be the first time all
three arms of our company would come
together to take a community hospital
and take all three areas under one
umbrella so it an actually create a
beacon, a shining light of what a 21st
century hospital, community hospital
could look like and thrive in a
financially distressed area, thrive
with good management and thrive with
prevention. One of the biggest issues
in the importance of saving New York as
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well as other states is you want to
prevent disease, and you want to
prevent the exacerbation of existing
diseases. I will make the argument
that you need an acute care hospital.
A multi specialty plank is not enough.
It goes part of the way. But an acute
care hospital not for the admissions,
but for all the outpatient procedures,
whether it be outpatient heart
procedures, biopsy, endoscopy, advanced
radiology studies that you really can't
do that well in a multi specialty
clinic. You need an acute care
facility to do it. We can either go
with a brand new hospital which will
take years, or you take a hospital like
Peninsula, which has a decent structure
and we can bring in the financing, we
can bring in the senior management and
we can bring in the 21st century
technology to make this hospital I
literally promise you paperless within
the first six months of us taking
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ownership.

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

Unfortunately, bankruptcy law has no responsibility to keeping jobs and it has no responsibility to keeping health care. That is where bankruptcy law has fallen short, and we need the politicians to step in and tell the
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courts, hey, slow down. If there is a
win win for the creditors and a win win
for the community, a win win for the
hospital it should be entertained. It
shouldn't just be shut down because a
trustee wanted to quickly make money
for the creditors. We have seen this
time and time again in bankruptcy law.
They have no responsibility to the
community, to maintaining jobs, and in
that case health care. But I honestly
believe as a team, if the Department of
Health is willing to sit down with the
community activists, with the local
politicians, with companies like mine,
we will come up with a win win for all
parties. Thank you.

MS. SOMMERMEIR: Good afternoon.

My name is Joan Sommermeir, and I am a
labor representative for the New York
State Nurses Association. Thank you
for giving me this opportunity to speak
about the urgent need for comprehensive
acute are for this community. The New
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York State Nurses Association represents is more than 35,000 registered nurses throughout New York State. From 1975 until 2008, this included 200 registered nurses at Peninsula Hospital Center. Although these registered nurses are no longer our members, they remain our colleagues. We too watched in agony as Medisys began to mismanage and choke the hospital to death. Sadly, after 104 years of service to this community, Peninsula closed its doors. The Nurses Association still shares Peninsula nurses' concern about their own welfare, but especially about their concern for the community and access to care. Peninsula Hospital may have been small, but it played a vital role here in the Rockaways. It has always been a safety net for the uninsured and the under insured. Regardless of the patient's personal status, everyone was treated with the same degree of care,
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attention, dignity and respect, whether the patient was a six year old with a twisted ankle or a single mother without health insurance.

Seven years ago, a report from the Berger Commission claimed that a fundamental driver of the crisis in our health care delivery system is excess capacity. Nurses that we represent, and who are our colleagues, care for patients in hospitals, and then they firmly disagreed with that statement, and we disagree with it now.

The acuity of patient population actually has increased over the past seven years. Patients are less likely to be admitted and more likely to be discharged from hospitals more quickly.

Our concern today is that the Health Department and the Board of Trustees will not move beyond the quick financial fix that they failed to take the steps were needed to ensure adequate access to care, and the future
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of the Rockaway communities. From our
experience, closing hospitals typically
failed to produce the promised savings,
and often leads to greater expenses.
It does not save millions of dollars
for tax payers. It does not solve the
critical problems facing our health
care system such as people without
health care coverage, and the glaring
imbalance in access to care.
What will happen to this community's
low income and elderly who have come to
rely on Peninsula's services? What
will happen to those who cannot travel
to other medical centers in the region?
What will happen in an emergency when
time is of the essence? The Rockaway
residents are scared, and they are
angry. Now is the time for our leaders
to stand up and do what is right. Now
is the time to step up and guarantee
that this community will continue to be
cared for by a first class, full
service health care facility. I thank
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you for your time.

MR. FOYER: Hi, good afternoon.
I am Bernie Foyer I live here in
Rockaway, and during the summer, I
worked at the National Park Service,
and I run the parking lot at Reis Park.
I have done this for 11 years. Let me
give you a scenario that happens two,
three or more times every year. We are
in the midst of a heat wave.
Temperatures are in the 90s. It is a
Saturday or a Sunday. We end up with
4,000 or 5,000 additional cars coming
onto this peninsula in the Reis Park
parking lot. With all this heat, it
happens that all of a sudden, giant
thunderstorms pop up. All of a sudden,
we have torrential rains, we have
lightning, we have thunder. Everybody
call at once takes off from the beach.
They get out the parking lot, and we
have gridlock, because on the Marine
Parkway Bridge, it is two lanes that is
all going out of Rockaway, and all the
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traffic backs up. You have got the same thing with the Cross Bay Bridge. Now if ambulances are on diversion off the peninsula, on those days, they are not going to get out of Rockaway for hours, because these gridlocks and the going across the bridges can take hours people are going to die because they wont get off the peninsula here. That is why we need the second hospital here, because they are not going to leave Rockaway.

COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Thank you. I want to ask number six through 10 to come back up. But before I do that, I just want to recognize some of the elected officials in the audience. We have got Senator Shirley Huntley, Senator Malcolm Smith, and I believe we have got Senator Addabo in the back, and we have representatives from the Borough President and from Congressman Turner's office. Have I missed anybody? Yes, and Congressman Sanzar.
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Thank you very much for being here.

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

We have a gentlemen from a company, I think I remember Peoples Choice, standing and telling you what his company is willing to do and work with you. In time, I imagine credit is being paid. This is should be your first priority. This is a not bankruptcy case, where business is closing down. This is the bankruptcy case where people will die. Personally, I know of someone in my family did not make it to an emergency room. Or if they did, they suffered more medical complications. I would go after this city big time, because it seems that the city is getting to the point where if you don't go after the pocketbook, they do not hear you.

Thanks.

MS. GREEN: Good afternoon. My name is Susan Green. Welcome, Dr. Shah, elected officials and
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everybody else that was willing to come
and hear us. I am a former employee of
Peninsula Hospital Center. I am a
laboratory technologist that has worked
in that laboratory for 41 years. I
want to welcome you to the Rockaway
Peninsula. We are now officially in a
state of emergency. Only one hospital
open, and no functioning blood bank at
all. North Shore LIJ has been running
Saint Johns' blood bank since December
of 2011. The blood work is being sent
to LIJ to be processed. It is now
known that LIJ will be running their
laboratory for the next couple of
years, just as they do in Saint
Joseph's in Bethpage, Long Island.
Saint John's needed help to bring up
their standards. They were given help
instead of being closed. Brookdale
in Brooklyn is also a part of Medisys,
and they are being given help. They
are being told to go in there and
restructure. Why them and not us? We
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have been duped. Why did the
Department of Health go after Peninsula
Hospital? Do you honestly think it is
possible for Saint John's to carry the
entire peninsula? The area by Saint
John's is totally congested. Narrow
one way streets, private homes,
apartment buildings, no parking, and an
overcrowded emergency room. It is just
a joke. Isn't the Department of Health
and Saint John's worried about HCAPS?
HCAPS stands for Hospital Consumer
Assessment of Health Care Providers in
Systems. It is a national survey that
evaluates the care and satisfaction of
patients with their hospital care by
asking questions of discharged
patients. The level of patient
satisfaction determines the level of
payment to the hospital by the
government. Low customer satisfaction
scores means low pay. The higher the
level of satisfaction, the higher the
payment. Patient satisfaction results
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are publicized.

There are 133,000 people on the
peninsula. The beaches will be open at
the end of the month, bringing in about
10,000 people a week to this area.

Aren't these people entitled to proper
health care? It is totally unfair. I
grew up in the neighborhood with Andrew
Cuomo. We have five hospitals at our
fingertips. They were all five to ten
minutes away. Why doesn't anybody care
about the sick, poor and the elderly?
They have a right to a good life and
proper health care. Do the right thing
for them. We elected all of the
officials. You work for us. We put
you in office and we will work hard to
take you out if you don't give us
something that we really need. This is
not a threat, this is a promise. I
don't live in this neighborhood. I
come from Suffolk County every day to
help people of Rockaway, and I want to
know where this man is today. This is
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Governor Cuomo's picture. Where is he today? He should be here. This is a state of emergency.

MS. CLOSKY: Good afternoon. My name is Rita Closky, and I am also a member of the Peninsula Hospital laboratory for over 36 years. As a member of the hospital laboratory, I was shocked when I learned that the hospital was shutting its doors based on a DOH inspection of February of 24, 2012. Yes, there were deficiencies, yes, we needed to make corrections, yes, we needed improvement. But there is no way that these citations should have ever led to the closure of the institution.

We were given ample resources to make all of the corrections needed, and we did. We were virtually a brand new laboratory. Yet no one from DOH would take the time to come and see what we had done, and how up to date we were. I can only ask one question. Why?
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Based on an incomplete, preliminary plan of correction submitted by the trustee, Lorie Lapin Jones, signed by someone we did not know and reviewed by some unknown source. I don't believe this. I worked in the blood bank, and on the day of inspection, the blood bank inspector commented that the room was too hot. There were platelets on a rotator, and she told me that these platelets were compromised due to the heat. Yet a little while later, the floor nurse came to the blood bank to pick up the platelets for infusion. Not only did the inspector allow these compromised platelets to be transfused, but she followed the nurse to the floor to witness the entire procedure. She return to the lab satisfied. I suppose the blood products in question were not so compromised after all. On the same day, blood gas specimens came to the lab from an outside nursing home by courier. The chemistry inspector asked
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many questions about these specimens. Who was the courier, where did the specimens come from, when were they drawn. Did the courier come directly to the lab or could he have stopped for lunch before bringing them to the lab. He had many questions about the validity of these blood specimens. However, he let the tech do all the testing and report out the results. He too thought these specimens were compromised but allowed the work to go out.

It seems to me that the DOH inspectors were only concerned about the work our lab was doing for a published report. But in actuality they were clearly satisfied that patients were not being compromised at all. I say this is why you close a lab, and this is why you close a hospital, serving a community for over 104 years? This is why you put lives at risk? There has to be a better explanation than lab
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deficiencies. So I reiterate what is the real reason Peninsula Hospital is closed?

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

Another thing is we talked about the beach. This is a beach community. We have a lot of people coming, like Bernie said. You have drownings, you get people that hurt on the beach. We know for a fact that Saint John's is
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going to be overwhelmed. We have an
overwhelmed staff. What kind of job
are you going to get out of an
overwhelmed staff at a hospital? That
doesn't go, that doesn't go, no where.
Second of all, he is also right about
the gridlock. But even beside the
gridlock, you have got people coming
out of Breezy. Suppose they decided
that they didn't want to go to Saint
John's Hospital, and they said make a
left, let's go to Coney Island
Hospital, let's go here, and the bridge
goes up, which goes up three times a
year. How would you like to be in that
ambulance with a heart attack? I doubt
in 21 minutes that you are going to
make it to the hospital. That is all I
have to say.

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

MS. CLARK: Good afternoon. My
name is Annette Clark. I am a
resident. I live down the block, and
sometimes we need Peninsula because
there is a respiratory center there
that does the asthmatic people. It is
crucial for anyone, especially a young
child or an older person. We can be
there with cardiac arrest within less
than three minutes.

Unfortunately, 2010, I got kidney
failure. I was called by my doctor to
go to the emergency room immediately.
Kidney failure. For me? Probably I
figured oh, well, maybe in another
couple of hours, two weeks, three
weeks, it would be fine. Well, it
wasn't fine. I had no kidney function
at all. If it was not for Peninsula
Hospital, I would be dead right now and
not able to speak to you. I was on
dialysis immediately. They gave me
vascular in the chest with catheters.
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I did not go to Saint John's after I left Peninsula. I didn't go to Saint John's dialysis center because I would have to be there at 10:00 in the evening to be there until 10:00 in the morning.

There is only one center in this Rockaway, and that is Saint John's. Peninsula Hospital had four machines, and I think it is disgraceful that the Department of Health sits there and shuts down a hospital that is needed desperately in this area. So where do we have to go for dialysis now? We have got to go either to Brooklyn or you have got to go to South Nassau, and that where I went. I cooked at 4 o'clock, we left at a quarter to 5:00. I was there by 6:30, and I was on the machine until midnight. This went on and on and on. I asked God to either take me or to fix it. Thank God for the mercy of God, he did fix it. I am no longer on dialysis, but that doesn't
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mean I have kidney function. I only
2 have 30 percent of one kidney. If I am
3 in trouble again, where do I go? To
4 Saint John's, where you have got to sit
5 in an emergency room that not only
takes Saint John's people, you are
taking Peninsula's people too. So you
6 are in an emergency room, and what am I
7 supposed to do, go to South Nassau in
8 Long Island? Mercy Hospital? I know
9 personally in the last month, I should
say three weeks ago, there are four
10 people, very good friends of mine that
11 have passed away. Three of them is
12 because they were diverted. If they
13 had emergency care when they were
14 supposed to have emergency care, and
15 the ambulance came when they were
16 supposed to be, they would be alive
17 today.
18 I think it is despicable that you do
19 this to people. That not only do we
20 have all this construction and you
21 can't get in and out of the place to
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begin with. But an ambulance comes
down here, they were coming from here,
and they were going on the opposite
side of the traffic to get through
traffic here. It is appalling to me
that the Department of Health would
allow something like this to happen.
You should be ashamed of yourselves,
all of you.

MR. LYNCH: Good afternoon. My
name is Joe Lynch. I have resided in
the Rockaway Peninsula for over 50
years. Rockaway is indeed a close knit
community of hard working middle class
families. I have always supported the
City and the State when called upon,
both financially and economically. We
also pay our fair share of taxes to
both the City and the State. I
currently serve on the Board of
Directors of the Breezy Point
Cooperative. I am also the Chairman of
the Breezy Point Cooperative, the
largest cooperative of single family
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dwellings and private residences in the city and the state. Our cooperative is nested in the extreme western tip of this Rockaway Peninsula. It includes families, the Peoples Association of Roxbury, the Rockaway Planning Association and the Point Breezy Association. I speak tonight on behalf of fellow shareholders as well as my neighbors in Rockaway Beach, Broad Channel, Belle Harbor and Neponset. We all have a common goal and a bond, which is a continuation of the ongoing operation of Peninsula Hospital, Rockaway's very needed community health center.

Just some quick points. Why should we continue to pay our fair share of taxes when the state and city continue to give us inequitable and unfair return of city and state services? Train service, sanitation and now it appears medical response and services for our hard earned dollars. Being on the most
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extreme western point in Queens, the
families of Breezy Point will be the
community most adversely affected by
the permanent closure of this hospital.
Once again, the citizens of Breezy
Point are getting dealt an unfair hand
relative to their tax contributions to
the city and the state. The additional
time needed to get to an alternative
health facility from the Rockaways in a
medical emergency, especially on a
beautiful summer day, will surely
result in loss of life, especially
where minutes and seconds can mean all
the difference.
For numerous years, our residents and
the community relied heavily on the
services of positive medical response
we received for medical problems at
Peninsula Hospital. They also never
let us down. I also saw first hand
various medical emergencies involving
my own family, the dedication,
commitment and professionalism of the
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physicians, nurses and staff. We in Rockaway truly viewed this facility as our medical lifeline. Unfortunately the New York State Department of Health has now replaced our lifeline with medical uncertainty. The Breezy Point Cooperative and the western Rockaway Peninsula represent middle class families, with a historically documented work ethic, real involvement in our communities, pride in our country, similar ethnic and religious beliefs, and an ongoing commitment to the protection of our families, homes and the neighborhood. Rockaway, as well documented, also paid a very heavy toll on 911. Many city workers, New York City fire fighters, New York City Police and New York City teachers remain the true backbone and the foundation of Rockaway and the Breezy Point communities. This hard working citizen base, along with all Rockaway residents, need and demand a community
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and local hospital, something that the trustee and DOH have failed to realize. We deserve nothing less.

I really do not understand how a reported lab problem, which also appears very correctable to the impartial, non medical observer, somehow can shut down a long standing hospital. Something in this equation does not add up. Several very dedicated members of the Peninsula Hospital Board of Directors have had discussions with interested parties on potential funding alternatives. For whatever reason, the trustees from the Department of Health appeared to have their minds made up on the final outcome from the start. In fact, the media advisory announcing today's meeting states that it is to solicit public comments on health services in the Far Rockaway Queens community following the closure of Peninsula. As far as DOH is concerned, this appears
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to have always been a done deal. The
needed and fully expected public proper
due diligence criteria in this decision
process appears very lacking. In fact,
the Department of Health had no
intentions for any public hearing on
this prior to pressure from political
leaders, former employees and staff,
and the dedicated board members still
working proactively to save Rockaway's
hospital.

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

MR. MARRERO: Sir, please wrap
up.

MR. LYNCH: My community of the
Breezy Point Co-op consisting over
10,000 hard working citizens, believes
that your closure of Peninsula Hospital
has only sabotaged that mission. Thank
you.
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MR. SCHUBERT: Good afternoon, esteemed members of the public and the Health Department. I give a thanks to Joe Addabo, Michele Titus and the other elected representatives. My name is Paul Schubert. I am known by some as Tiger Paul, community activist. To my credits so far, I have 15 wheel chair ramps, three traffic lights through the good offices and help of Audrey Pfeiffer. I want to bring out some powerful words. Liability, accountability, Article 15, New York State Penal Code. Which clearly states that if through the action or inaction of an individual, including government officials, and someone dies, someone suffers grievous physical injury. Joe Addabo has promised me he is going to increase the penalty on this law. I also want to bring out the asthma, chronic asthma from Breezy Point to Bayswater. Its source is the manufactured gas plant owned by
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National Grid. The bad smell in the air has been the cause of all the cancer in the Rockaways. I can bring in testimony from Jamaica Bay Wild Life Refuge Rangers. They smell the odor of coal tar. Your shutting down this hospital, means all the people who have cancer in the Rockaways, all our mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmas who died, three teachers in the scholars academy.

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

MS. LEBOW: Good afternoon. My
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name is Michelle Lebow, and I'm a laboratory worker at Peninsula for 41 years. We all know the Department of Health used the lab to close the hospital because of the Berger Commission Report. It was stated 400 beds are needed, and the peninsula now has 257 beds. There are 133,000 people on the peninsula, plus the extra beach traffic, and a bridge that is now under construction for repair. I am sure since 2006, the population and the buildings are still rising. Yes, the lab had its citations since 2006, 2008 and 2010. Then Revival took over. Eight inspectors came in, unheard of. No reinspections to see if corrective actions were taken, or in progress, but that was okay. Mind you, it was always the same inspector that did the inspection. We pulled in January 100 percent on the proficiency. How bad could we have been? Why, I ask? We know why. You never wanted us to
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survive. I really care about this hospital. If I am wrong, prove it.

Keep the hospital open. Listen to the people, listen to the suggestions, be open minded, but I think you came in with an agenda. Your agenda when you brought all those people in and shut us down in one day, and didn't give us the common, decent, human courtesy that we deserved to turn around and reinspect us. We were 75 to 80 percent there two weeks before you closed us. You wanted us down, you shut us down. Watch yourselves. I hope that you are happy that there is going to be blood going to be on your hands. It won't be on mine.

MR. BERGER: Commissioner and honored guests, my name is Richard Berger, and I am a semi retired emergency medical technician who has served on ambulances within the communities comprising the Rockaway peninsula and Broad Channel for 38
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years. I am here to address the
catastrophe of the closing of the
Peninsula Hospital Center, and the
impact on both the region and the Saint
John's Episcopal Hospital, currently
the only hospital serving the region.
Outside of the Rockaways and Broad
Channel, in the rest of the city, it is
given that nobody is usually no more
than 15 minutes travel time away from a
hospital's emergency room, or perhaps
45 minutes from a specialty ER such as
a trauma or burn center.
The problem then becomes the wait to be
seen. If I understand correctly, there
was a survey some years ago which
concluded that we didn't have enough
population to support the need for two
hospitals. But at the same time,
neither one of the two could handle the
case load alone. With the closing of
the Peninsula Hospital Center, the
Saint John's Episcopal Hospital is
being overwhelmed. The population of
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the Rockaways and Broad Channel is, per
the figures I have been given, roughly
120,000 people. We are both an aging
population, and with the continued
building of the Auburn by the Sea
community, a growing one. In 1975, for
my count from a handout from a private,
non 911 ambulance service provider that
I was then working for, roughly a third
of nursing homes and extended care
facilities in the city, outside of the
hospitals, were in Queens County, and
half of them were here in Rockaway. It
took an act of the State Legislature
and legislation to halt the
construction of more facilities as we
were declared to be in an impacted
area.
We are also isolated. We are, after
all, on a peninsula, with basically
only four ways out via bridges to
Brooklyn, Staten Island and Nassau
County. In 1993, during the
Northeaster, flood waters caused shut
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down of all roadways into and out of
the Rockaways and Broad Channel. When
the Marine Parkway and Cross Bay
Bridges were shut down to traffic on
September 11, 2001, the backlog of
traffic going inland through Nassau
County was so bad, it took over a half
hour for some vehicles to move less
than 50 feet. I know because I was in
one of those private vehicles. If
there is no place to move to get out of
the way, nobody can move out of the way
of any emergency vehicle attempting to
proceed along the road under an
emergency lights and siren response.
Emergency rooms can and do get
backlogged with people asking for
medical help. There are nice people
who don't have a primary care
physician. Instead, they have an
emergency room to go to.
In the normal times of temperature
variations in the spring and fall, both
of the hospitals we previously had on
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our beach can get crowded. Under state law, anyone who is presented at an emergency room asking for aid must receive it. The hospitals can ask for category diversion or total diversion due to temporary lack of beds or specific equipment used in patient treatment. The local ambulance service providers usually will divert to the next nearest hospital, except when the patient is in extremis, which is when the patient might not make it to that next emergency hospital. In all cases, diversions are a courtesy extended to, not a right of the hospitals asking for the diversion. All EMT and paramedic training programs will tell you in the event of a stroke that time is brain loss.

In cardiac pulmonary resuscitation, the time taught us is after 10 minutes without blood flow, brain cells start to die, irreparably. Even with the best skill, EMTs and paramedics

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bringing the emergency room to the patients, some cases need the definitive care that can only come from the local ER with machinery and medicines that cannot be carried in the ambulance. An ambulance crew has to wait for an examining bed in the ER to open. If multiple ambulances are waiting for a bed, consider people who just walk or drive to the ER to be seen. They won't know until they arrive that care might be temporarily quicker gong to a more distant hospital.

In addition to heavy usage of the Saint John's Episcopal Hospital on a regular day, we have the possibility of an MCI or multiple casualty incident. By definition, an MCI can be directed when an incident generates or might generate five or more patients. This can range from an overturned mini van with five people aboard to a repeat of the American Airlines Flight 587 crash in
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the Belle Harbor section, which had 265
fatalities.

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

MR. MARRERO: Thank you, sir.
MS. LARKIN: Good afternoon. My
name is Barbara Larkin. I am the past
president of the Belle Harbor Property
Owners Association, Vice President of
Queens Civic Congress. I was on the
Advisory Board of Peninsula Hospital,
and I taught in PS 114, PS 42, Saint
Francis, a combination of over 35
years. But I speak as an individual
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this afternoon.

First of all, I commend all the individuals who have the courage to come out and speak their minds today. Because of all the problems that we have had in Rockaway, sometimes we have disagreed over different things, but I can say today from Breezy Point through Bays Water, we can all agree that this is probably the largest problem we have ever had. I would also like to say I grew up in Brooklyn, but was very happy to eventually come to Rockaway with my parents in 1965, married my husband and teach in a neighborhood school. That said, I lived with my mother-in-law since the day I was married. On a Saturday afternoon, and thank God it was a Saturday afternoon, my husband and I were putting up the Christmas tree, and she had pains in her chest. We picked her up, we put her in the car, we rushed her to Peninsula Hospital. They told us if we hadn't
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gotten her there then, she would have
died. She was there for three weeks.
They wanted to release her on Christmas
Eve day. We didn't like the way she
looked. We refused to take her home.
She had another heart attack that
evening. She was in the hospital for
another couple of weeks. A few years
later, my dad was on 116th Street, and
had a fainting spell. Thank God
someone found my phone number in his
pocket. They called me. They put him
in an ambulance with me. We got him
down to Peninsula Hospital, and one of
the wonderful nurses got his blood
sugar up from 14 to where ever it
needed to be, and saved his life. Two
hours ago, I was with my mother, who is
91 at Peninsula Hospital picking up her
records. She cried. It is a sad day
in Rockaway for Vincencia Becker, Nanny
Toots, the grandmother of Rockaway, to
have to go to Peninsula to pick up all
of her records. Mine weren't ready, so
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I am going another day.

I would like to implore the elected officials, whom I know very, very well, and I know who do a very, very fine job, to know this is our biggest problem. Since many people are working at this time, I implore them to have an on line petition so everybody in Rockaway and of Queens, indeed the state could present to our Governor, who I know is a fine man, I don't know him personally. As a graduate of Saint John's University, I have met his dad, and I had my picture taken with his mother. I understand he is a wonderful, wonderful governor. I don't think he realizes this problem. I know he is very busy. I didn't expect him to be here today, and I know if our elected officials could get together and get this on line petition going and present it to our Governor, I know, I am confident he will help solve the problem for all of Rockaway. Thank you
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for your time.

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

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you very much, Commissioner Shah for being here,
Commissioner Clancy, Commissioner Cook, Associate Commissioner Johnson.
Commissioner, I am sure you are familiar with the phrase when one door
closes, another one opens. My concern today is when you close the door of Peninsula, you are opening the door of death to the Rockaways. I think it is important, and I know you have heard testimony from a lot of the residents here. But you really need to understand the Rockaways, you need to understand the demographics of the Rockaways, you need to understand this is a community that is growing. You have a neighborhood, Auburn by the Sea, which is growing, bringing more than 10,000 people out here. We just put
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close to $15 million into all of the
trains that are running along the A
line. You have the YMCA that is being
built, a school is being built.

Everything that an urban renewal area
gets is happening, except for the
reverse of the medical facility. The
concern that I have, and I have had a
meeting with these individuals here, we
have been on the phone. It has been
very aggressive, very testy, and I did
what I could. The best that I could to
try to help them understand this
process. The problem that I have, and
I have been on the phone with yourself.
I have been on the phone with the
trustee, I have been on the phone with
the Governor, with the Governor's
office.

Here is my challenge. The challenge to
us was find someone that could possibly
give up the money or the resources to
have the lab retested or reopened. We
did that. That was rejected. They put
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up cash, and then were told no. Then
they said find somebody else to come in
and buy the hospital to open it. We
did that with People's Choice. You
said no. Then it was asked perhaps if
you talk to the creditors, the biggest
one being 1199, perhaps we could work
it out with them. We talked to 1199,
and all they said to us was after
communicating with the Health
Department, you said no. The problem
is every time there was a solution that
we were asked to come up with, after we
came up with a solution, there was
always a no. That is why you are
hearing the public here saying they
think there was a preconceived
condition to close this hospital.

Commissioner, we are appealing to your
heart. I know your background. I know
where you have come from. You are an
honorable individual. You have done
tremendous work in the health field.

When we closed down Mary Immaculate
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Hospital, Jamaica Hospital, Queens
Hospital was there to take the
pressure. When you closed down Saint
John's, you had Booth to take the
pressure. When they closed down Saint
Vincent's, you have got hospitals in
Manhattan to take the pressure. You
closed down Peninsula Hospital. Saint
John's cannot take the pressure. You
have Senator Huntley here, you have
Assemblyman Goldfeder here, you have
Addabo here. You heard about Turner,
you heard about Sanders. You heard
about Michelle Titus. You have every
single elected official, the Borough
President's office, all here. We are
all here. The Rockaway Peninsula is
unique.
Commissioner, you have to take the time
to understand us, understand the
peninsula. If something goes wrong on
this island, on this peninsula, if
something happens with the bridge, and
it has happened, you cannot get across,
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that is serious. You cannot send
everybody to Saint John's. Saint
John's cannot handle what they have
now. They could not handle what
Peninsula had when they were here. Now
you have more people moving out here.
Commissioner, I am begging you, I am
pleading with you, please don't do
this. You have to give us a full
fledged hospital. I will say to you, I
will make this commitment to you on the
record. Whatever that I can do as one
of the Senators of the 63, whatever I
need to do, any resources that are
coming my way through the Governor,
through the Senate, anything that I can
do, I will do. As they are diverting
patients off, I will divert any
resources, any dollars that I get for
this hospital to be put back.
Commissioner, please, that is all I am
asking, please. I know you are put
sometimes in a very untenable
situation. I understand the challenge
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that you have. We have talked often.

This particular situation is unique.

They took care of Brookdale. Take care
of Peninsula. You cannot let this

close.

COMMISSIONER SHAH: Thank you so

much for your testimony. I admire the
courage of everyone who is here, who is
speaking on behalf of the needs of this
community. We hear you loud and clear.

We are looking to find ways to make
this work. The reality is we have gone
far, and we have a lot of work to do.

We know what your needs are in terms of
primary care, in terms of acute care,
and there is work being done as we
speak on increasing the capacity of
both. I am happy to listen to you.

SENATOR SMITH: Let me just say

this to you, please. The Commissioner

is here. If we are going to get any
answers, you have got to listen. I

know you are pissed off. I am pissed
off too, but we have got him here now.
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Let's at least hear what he has to say.
It will be on the record, and we will
be able to move forward from here, but
you cannot not let him speak. This is
the gentleman that runs the Health
Department. He is the one that tells
the Governor what to do, how to do it.
You have got to hear what he has got to
say.

COMMISSIONER SHAH: So our
commitment to you, to everyone in this
room, to everyone on this peninsula, is
to figure out how to best meet the
needs as we understand them, and we
will work very closely with you, with
the elected officials, with the
advocates, with the citizens of this
area, to figure out what your needs are
and how to get them. I think that for
too long, this community has not gotten
what it deserves in terms of care. We
will try to figure out what your needs
are and work with you to get them. I
can't say that I have all the answers.
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I wish I did. I wish there was a silver bullet that said do this one thing and it will fix all the problems. It is not that easy. I wish it were, because then we would do it if the answer were that easy. The reality is there are extreme needs for this community, and our job is to figure out how best to meet those needs in the term and in the long term. So that is my commitment back to you.

SENATOR HUNTLEY: I would just like to say I am here to support you. I lived through the closing of Mary Immaculate Hospital. We marched, we screamed, we yelled, we fought on the ground. They closed it. I met with the Governor on Tuesday to talk about Peninsula. I will be meeting again with him next week. But just be sure. Don't believe everything that you hear, because I don't. I am being very honest. I don't believe everything I hear. I don't know why in the
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communities, normally the poorer
communities or the lower middle class,
but not the wealthy, they close
hospitals. We lost three hospitals in
Queens, the other part of Queens. Now
we are losing this one. That is four.
Other hospitals survive. Why? Did you
ever think about it? Why did they
survive? The state has money to do
whatever the hell they want to do.
Okay. They have money. As far as when
they went in for the lab, the state
could pay for that. We pay for
nonsense. We pay for stuff that is not
even important. We spent more money on
paper than we do on hospitals, okay.
So I will be working with you. We are
not going to just let this go away. We
are going to open this hospital.

COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Thank you.

16 through 23. I just want to make an
announcement that we have signers here
if anybody who is in need of that,
please indicate to us if you are in

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need of sign language interpretation.

Thank you.

MS. STERN: Hi, I am Leona Stern. I have been living out here since I was six weeks old, and. This is my able assistant. I am able to walk down this aisle without assistance even though everybody tried to help me, because of the expertise of the staff of this hospital. I fell and my knees just disintegrated, and my leg disintegrated. I was in a coma for two weeks, and they got me up here. So thank you. Not to make light of this discussion and that meeting, but because I have been in this hospital so many times, I think most of the people in this audience have seen me naked at one time or another, and I am grateful. Two times in my life, I have met with death, seriously met with death, and they patched me up and I am here. If you are going to take away this hospital from us, the reason I'm here
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is because I was close enough to the hospital, and you have a wonderful staff. If there were plenty of kids bleeding on the beach, you wouldn't think of closing this hospital so quickly. But you don't know what it looks like when a kid slices their leg on the beach, among other things. We didn't talk mostly about kids with asthma, not being able to get to the hospital fast enough. We really don't know why you closed the hospital. We need an answer. Thank you.

MR. SALMON: Tough act to follow. I'm Peter Salmon, past president of the Neponset Property Owners Association. I would like to say that a lot of people think that the people on the west end just are concerned with the emergency room. That is not a fact. I had two major operations at Peninsula, and extended care there, stays there. And I have had ambulatory surgeries a few times.
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there. I have used it, my wife uses it, and many of my neighbors do. And we find that it is very important that the hospital be there. Not only do we use it, but the residents who live within walking distance of Peninsula really are those that are going to suffer going forward. Many of them do not have automobiles. They could walk there from the Ocean Bay houses, Ocean Village, the 39th Street houses. They could walk to Peninsula. Now if they have something, they can't walk there any more. So they have to go and try to get an ambulance to take them somewhere, or they don't get the care they need, and it gets worse they then could end up dying from neglect because they were not able to get to the emergency room in Peninsula. So it is more than just the ambulances that are being diverted. The people are being diverted, and the demand for ambulances to take people to the hospital has
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increased. So you will have more
ambulance runs now than you had before
the closing. Also, we are coming into
the summer season, and this is
critical, as you have heard many of our
speakers say. That it is really a
disgrace that the state did not act
properly. You are now helping the two
biggest creditors in the bankruptcy
court.

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

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

MS. THOMPSON: Commissioner
Johnson, Commissioner Cook,
Commissioner Clancy, I see Commissioner
Shah is missing, but I guess he is
coming back. Brothers and sisters of
this community, my name is Claire
Thompson, and I am a registered nurse,
first of all. I am also vice-president
of 1199 SEIU, United Health Care
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Workers, and I am here to give testimony. 1199, United Health Care Workers, represents more than 600 hospital care givers who were employed at Peninsula Hospital, many of whom not on work at the southeast Queens hospital, but also make their homes in the community. In fact, I lived and worked in this community, and my relatives, my very close relatives are still here, numerous of my relatives, a number of my relatives are still here.

We are deeply disappointed that Peninsula Hospital has closed its doors, after tremendous effort by many to keep it open. It has also been the position of our union that the closure of another acute care facility in Queens is unacceptable, and more so when it happens in Far Rockaway. For over a year, 1199 SEIU has exhausted every possibility to save the hospital from closure, including drawing attention to this dire fiscal situation.
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In May of 2011 when we called a political breakfast at the dinner up there in the Rockaways, early one morning, to emphasize this crisis. Even when the hospital defaulted the workers benefit fund, every attempt was made to work with the hospital to resolve its arrears. They were granted numerous extensions and latitude to find a solution. We continued to raise the issue for months in an attempt to stave off the crisis, and to support the initiative taken by Revival Home Health Care. Unfortunately, we were among those who were misled by the investors and their management. Access to quality health care in the Rockaways continues to be our priority. It is extremely important that the services are maintained on Rockaway Peninsula, and we are working with the trustee, the State Department of Health, the Governor to explore all options for the repurposing of the
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Peninsula site. Our approach to meeting the health care needs in the Rockaway community is two fold. First, 1199 SEIU is in favor of building a new state of the art facility in the Rockaway peninsula as recommended by the Berger Commission some time back. This new facility should be under the direction of Saint John's Episcopal Hospital as an affiliate of a larger health care system. Such as for example the North Shore LIJ. Within three to four years, that facility can efficiently and effectively serve the Rockaway community. We remain supportive of the effort to find new outside bidders to reopen the hospital despite impediments. There are no current bidders who are willing to take the risk, and the trustee will make the decision at an auction in the next six to seven weeks. In any case, health care services at the repurposed Peninsula must include but not limited
to an emergency room, an ambulatory care service, surgery unit, a psychiatric unit, an emergency service to treat psychiatric patients.

Furthermore, the Joseph P. Addabo Family Health Center, one of the leading providers of preventative and comprehensive primary health care in New York should be involved in providing extended ambulatory services. The repurposing of Peninsula Hospital is a crucial community investment.

MR. MARRERO: Please wrap up.

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

MR. MARRERO: Could you please wrap it up.

MS. THOMPSON: I will try. I am at the end, Commissioner. When
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configuring the most resourceful and responsible manner for a transformed Peninsula, the former employees must have priority status. In the mean time, they are protected by 1199 job security fund, which provides mandatory placement, training and health care benefits.

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

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

MS. REDWICK: My name is Phyllis Redwick. I live in Bays Water. I am an ordinary citizen. My husband and I had occasion to use Saint Johns in the last I would say couple of months. We were very well treated. We were very lucky. Because while we were being taken care of at different times, ambulances and their drivers were being turned away because Saint John's Emergency Room simply could not take
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them, patients were practically, and I
am exaggerating, but not too much, they
were practically hanging from the
walls. There was no room for them. I
am glad that you came today to Far
Rockaway, and Rockaway because you
heard about Breezy Point, you heard
mention of Bays Water. From Bays Water
to Breezy Point, we have a beautiful
community. It is so beautiful that we
invite you to come and buy one of the
homes or the condos or the coops that
are available. I can tell you about
the bridges. All the bridges go up.
You cannot get to Nassau because the
bridge goes up every hour or so, with
boats and ships coming through. You
know that already. But you don't know
how wonderful it is to live here. I
think you should have the opportunity.
Unfortunately, at the same time you
will have the opportunity to enjoy
every single part of this peninsula,
you will also have the opportunity to
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join with us in having difficulty in
getting to a hospital. That is the sad
part of the whole thing.

I have two more concerns. One is hope.
One is hope that you will listen to us
and follow through. I don't care if
you build a big, big one or open up
Peninsula. I hope you open up
Peninsula first. But my second concern
is that you will be like the New York
Board of Standards and Appeals. The
New York Board of Standards and Appeals
listens to communities speak to protect
themselves and their communities from
overdeveloping. But the Board of
Standards and Appeals nods their heads
and says no, sir, no, ma'am, we don't
care, we do what we want.

My fervent hope is that you are not
like the Board of Standards and
Appeals. My other comment is about
Malcolm Smith. When we needed to have
hope to develop our community and down
zone it, he was there. He was there
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for every single meeting, every single possibility. I know that whatever he said today was so. He will be there, everywhere to help us turn this around.

So I thank you.

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

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TITUS: I am Assemblywoman Michelle Titus, and I represent the 31st Assembly District, which includes Far Rockaway and Auburn. I thank the Department of Health for holding this public hearing here in my community, and listening to the actual
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Residents impacted by the recent closing of Peninsula Hospital here in the Rockaways. Peninsula Hospital has served this community for over a century. It was an integral part of the community that provided a center health care and employment for over 1,000 families. I have to say two years ago when I co-sponsored the legislation that was spearheaded by Assemblyman Roy Lansman in my house and Senator Huntley in the Senate, that created the law that allows you to hold these public hearings after a hospital closure. It was a result of at that time the onslaught that we had faced here in Queens. It was right after Mary Immaculate had closed and how the other hospitals had to try, try with their best, to incorporate that new flow of patients.

I am saddened, however, today stand here after that law was implemented in my own community, talking about
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Peninsula Hospital. It was never thought of two years ago that we would be here in the Rockaways dealing with this. We were actually I want to say having several conversations at the Borough President's office with regards to how we can have state of the art health care here in the Rockaway after the Berger Commission provided their report. As you heard and you will hear from the testimony, the Borough of Queens has distinguishing characteristics which would make a hospital closing just unfathomable. It is not reasonable nor is it rational to deny the significant population of elderly residents, cancer sufferers, job seekers and new residents access to health care facilities.

We have already endured seven consecutive years of budget cuts, the increasing cost of medical equipment and insurance, which is making it difficult for our hospitals to address
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the needs of our community. In comparing resources among other boroughs, Queens has only 1.4 hospital beds per 1,000, whereas other boroughs enjoy about 7.1 beds per 1,000 residents. The fact that the amount of certified beds in our region is significantly less than other boroughs is an inconsistency that needs to be addressed. However, in your examination of my particular district, you will find that there are specific concerns which constitute the necessity of Peninsula Hospital. In Far Rockaway alone, there are over 300 units of housing available for new residents attracted to the economic boom which we are experiencing. The population is projected to be increased about 20,000 residents within the next five years. A huge portion of my represented district is on the peninsula, and remains isolated from options of emergency or routine health care.
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facilities. In light of our population and location, it is clear that our community requires the presence of a hospital more than ever before. In addition, a significant portion of the population is aging. There are over 400,000 persons aged 60 and older, and about 40,000 persons aged 85 and older. Similarly, more than 400,000 persons are surviving without any form of health insurance. Citizens deserve to be served in their own communities. Peninsula Hospital also served as one of the largest employers for our residents.

Long time community residents, I have with me Dr. Ed Williams right here. Staff and volunteers who all deeply are invested in caring for residents, and assisting the medical society force to find other professions. Furthermore, I must emphasize that Peninsula Hospital is the only health care facility in the region that had a radiation oncology
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department. The rate of cancer is increasing on the peninsula. We cannot force cancer patients to other boroughs to receive treatment services. I recommend that we focus on stabilizing our hospitals and nursing home communities. Rockaway needs a full service hospital. I strongly recommend a full service hospital with preventative services to combat the medical disparities that we are also seeing in our communities. Peninsula Hospital is a life saver to many of my constituents because it provides jobs, services for the elderly, and those battling cancer. We cannot live with this closure. It is our job to resist undermining the perversion of health care. The viability of our community requires that such services be available. Once again, I thank you for your consideration.

DR. WILLIAMS: If I would have known that I was going to be at a
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circus, I would have waited until
Barnum and Bailey got in next month.
Because that is just what this is. Let
me just say first of all, my name is
Dr. Edward Williams, and I am the
president of the Far Rockaway NAACP.
It is a shame that the Commissioner
left, because I really would like for
him to hear what I have to say. I have
got two things to say. The question of
the integrity of the process that was
implemented for your department to
close Peninsula Hospital, number one,
and number two is a policy, is a
procedure, is it ethical, is it legal
to have your team, the Department of
Health team assigned to close
Peninsula, have discussions with the
CEO, the former president of the board,
the other organization that is
responsible for the financial problems
of this hospital, Medisys, to be
directed by his staff on ways in which
to close that hospital?
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I am throwing this to all my electeds. That is what you need to investigate.
You need to find out how legal and ethnical it is for the Department of Health's team to have conversations with the administration of that closing hospital, and giving them guidelines and instructions on how to accelerate closing the hospital. Then you come back to this community and justify it with what you claim is supposed to be realistic views of why you should be closing this hospital. It's criminal what went down. I was at that hospital every day.

By the way, I'm standing up here and I'm breathing and I'm walking because of the professional people that are sitting here without a job today and those who are not here today. You decided to walk in there and close that hospital down within the blink of an eye. I was there every day with resources poured into that hospital to
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correct it. You waited until a minute before the end of the day to decide that you were going to come in there and close that hospital. I've got to tell you this here, and I don't care what nobody says. At the end of the day, they're going to find out that the process and whatever was behind your reasoning for doing it was both unethical, illegal and a shame. If the Governor don't look into your behavior, then that's who we should hold accountable too, because you were wrong in doing it.

MS. GLASGOW: Wonderful. I am just happy to follow my president, president of the Far Rockaway NAACP. My name is Yvette Glasgow, and I served as former president years ago when things were running smoothly. But thank God for him now today. I just want to say when I moved to the Rockaways about 50 years ago, I settled in the Edgemere Houses right in front
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of Peninsula Hospital, and that was such an asset. Here I am in case of an emergency, I am right here in front of the hospital. I can walk across. Somebody said something about walkers. But my point is I have watched how the citizens of this community need that hospital. Gentlemen, please see what you can do. We have made appeals over and over. I am so proud of my elected officials, because when I have a hand in getting them re-elected, that's what it's all about, because of their good works. I don't mind going that extra step to see that they continue to serve us. I am not a medical health person. I am an educator, so I work in the schools around here, and I know most of the children. But look around this room. Look at the ages here. We need health facilities. I would say the average age here is 60, 65 or something. I am going to put it that way, retirement age, anyhow. We want
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to be able to live out our future
years in relatively good health. I'm
in relatively good health, and I'm 75.
What can I tell you? I want to be able
to walk into Peninsula Hospital, not
have to be carried in and brought
across the bridge that might be up and
all of that. Let me be able to get to
Peninsula Hospital. Thank you again.

MR. CAPANO: Thank you,

Mr. Clancy and the Department of Health
staff for being here. My name is Bob
Capano. I am the district director for
Congressman Bob Turner, who is in
Washington today. As the member of
Congress for this district, as a
resident of the Rockaways himself,
Congressman Turner is deeply disturbed
by the closure of a hospital so
important to this community's well
being. We have to remember that when
Peninsula was founded 104 years ago, in
1908, the nearest hospital was in Long
Island City, a two hour train ride
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away. Back then, this community came together in an incredible manner to organize and fund the construction of Peninsula. Everyone from local business leaders to trade unions to summer residents donated their time, money and resources to ensure the creation and the continued success of this hospital. Since then, it has provided essential life saving services to this ever expanding population.

Since the announcement was made that Peninsula would be closed, we have seen this same solidarity from our residents, similar to that seen 104 years ago. You just have to look around this room today. You can see this is an issue that transcends political party affiliations. You see Republicans, you see Democrats, you see Independents, you see Conservatives, you see Green Party and everybody in between. You see every racial, religious and ethnic group in this room.
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representing the great diversity of
Queens. All of us who depend on this
hospital.
We understand, we all understand that
the closure of an institution that has
served us over a century will devastate
this community, leaving only one
hospital, Saint John's. Already,
Saint John's is showing signs of
strain. Numerous reports have arisen
of people requiring emergency care
being diverted from Saint John's due to
lack of capacity. Those who are turned
away now face at least a 25 to 30
minute ambulance ride to the nearest
hospital. That is under low traffic
conditions. In an emergency situation,
these extra minutes may well be the
determining factor between life and
death. This situation has created
without a doubt a health care crisis in
the Rockaways that will continue to
afflict our community until a solution
is reached. In making the decision to
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close the hospital, the Department of
Health provided little advance warning
of their intentions, and did not
consider residents' concerns. In doing
so, they did not exhibit the
transparency we deserve on an issue of
such monumental importance to all of us
in this community.

Furthermore, the DOH seems to have
utterly failed to plan for alternative
means of addressing the very real
crisis Peninsula's closure has created.
This has left us desperately short of
life saving medical care in a community
whose population and health care needs
are only growing with time. Although
Congressmen Turner is grateful that
this public forum is being held,
something that we have been calling for
since the end of March, he is
disheartened at the fact that this
opportunity to solicit community input
was not made available before the
hospital's closure. Furthermore, we
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had hoped that this hearing would take
place later in the day for more of our
hard working residents to attend.

Perhaps most significantly, our
comments will not be addressed during
this meeting. Instead, DOH will issue
a report within 60 days addressing our
community's questions. We may now be
forced to wait nearly three months
after the hospital's closure to receive
answers to all of our most pressing
questions. Clearly the process for
holding these hearings is flawed, and
Congressman Turner hopes there will be
a review by our State Legislature.
They should evaluate the audit in which
the closings and the hearings are
executed. It is important that the
public be committed to partake in
hearings before a hospital closure is
put into effect, and not after.

Congressman Turner strongly urges the
DOH to take swift and decisive action
to ensure that the full health care
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needs of this great community are met. Any other course of action that
promotes the status quo is absolutely
unacceptable, and will impose an
unbearable cost on the health care of
our community and Rockaways and Broad
Channel. Thank you very much.

MS. SULIK: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Liz Sulik. I am
the former director of External Affairs
at Peninsula Hospital. I appreciate
the opportunity to speak today, and I
can only hope that the voices that you
have heard here today the impassioned
pleas of those for whom health care has
been provided all these years will not
go unnoticed by you. From the
beginning of the PHC closure process,
the treatment of the Rockaway community
by the New York State Department of
Health, the Governor's office, and
indeed even the court appointed trustee
has been nothing short of utter and
complete contempt. Many of us as well
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as our elected officials have been
requesting answers from the New York
State Department of Health for well
more than two months, concerning the
abrupt closure of Peninsula Hospital
Center. Certified letters to both the
Governor's office and to the New York
State Department of Health have gone
without response. Telephone calls and
requests for public meetings and
information have been brushed aside.
Even the law stating that the community
meeting must be held has been
disregarded.
All of this under a veil of secrecy and
vague, noncommittal responses. Yes,
the closure affects some 800 employees
at the hospital center who now must
find other jobs, or collect
unemployment. But without a doubt, the
consequences of such contempt go ever
so much further. They carry
consequences into a community that
serves the underserved, the elderly,
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the ill, as well as the fact that you
have heard this many times before this
afternoon, an isolated population in
Queens County. They reach people who
are receiving life saving chemotherapy
treatments. They reach a people who
are in need of chronic disease
maintenance. They reach thousands of
people who depend upon emergency
treatment, and those dependent upon
routine and preventative health care
close to home. For the first time in
the 43 years I have lived in this
community, I have heard people talk
about being frightened because of the
lack of health care. This is
absolutely not meant to disparage Saint
John's or Addabo Health Care Center.
They are there for the community, to be
sure, but they do not and are not
equipped to handle the influx of
patients they are going to get
occasioned by the closure of the
hospital center. I believe people will
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die, and I believe it will be because
of the result of a government in which
we, the people, have been asked to
place our trust. The New York State
DOH on its web site proudly
commemorated National Public Health
Week in April. The State Health
Commissioner, Dr. Shah, highlighted
recent public health achievements in
New York, and pledged to build on these
efforts to ensure all New Yorkers enjoy
optimal health. With all due respect,
this press release flies in the face of
the complete contempt that the New York
State Department of Health has shown to
this community. If the word committed
accurately describes the DOH's position
in general, then why not diligently
search out a solution. I have never
been a subscriber to conspiracy or
subversive theories.

My job at Peninsula Hospital as its
director was basically to disseminate
information. I have to say that in
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August, I worked with Commissioner Cook and the Department of Health during the first closure process. During that closure process, it was so emphasized to get the message out to the community and make sure that everybody knew so that they could seek alternative health care. That was not done this time. This was done purely with utter and complete contempt for the needs here in the community. I urge you please to consider everything that has been said here today, to make sure that we can continue with our health care here in this community. Thank you.

MS. RADER: Hello. My name is Laura Rader. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am a certified hospice and palliative nurse. I have worked at Peninsula for the past 25 years, the last four in an outstanding 16 bed inpatient unit, the Eisenstadt Hospice Unit. Hundreds of commendations, cards, letters we have
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received, and to the local paper only
validates the superb care and absolute
need for this unit. The word hospice
comes from ancient times, meaning a
place of shelter for travelers on a
difficult journey. We as professionals
are caring for patients on life's final
journey. Hospice is a specialty
program and our inpatient unit is
uniquely equipped to treat and manage
the often difficult needs and
circumstances of a patient with a life
threatening illness. I am going to be
working as a home care hospice nurse
out in the community. While most of
the patients are cared for in the
community, there does come a time when
they need an inpatient settings, but
symptoms are out of control.
Recently I have had several experiences
with patients in the homes needing our
unit, and there were no beds available.
One patient could not and would not go
to Melville, Long Island as the commute
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would cause undue hardship on the
family. Another patient needed
inpatient care, and instead of coming
to our unit and bypassing the emergency
room, she had to spend two days on a
stretcher in Saint John's. Not the
most appropriate care or the best
quality care for someone dying of
cancer at the end of their life.
Hospice recognizes dying as a part of
the natural life cycle. It respects
the rights of the patient to live
fully, including the right to die with
dignity, to enjoy the highest possible
quality of life, and to have their
needs met in the environment of his or
her choice. The Eisenstadt Hospice
Unit in Peninsula provided the highest
quality care to hundreds of patients
and their families over the last four
years when they needed it most. Its
closing leaves a huge void in Rockaway
and the surrounding communities. Thank
you.
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MR. RUDNICK: My name is Harvey Rudnick. You have heard my wife, and I can't really state more than that, that she has imparted to you. My concern is that this not a sham. This gentleman walked out. I would assume he cleared his calendar for the day so that he could be here. He just walked away. He told us he was going to be a nice man, and he is going to look into it. That is great, and you are taking notes. I hope you will go back. I am old enough to know that government should work for us. However, government doesn't work for us, and we found that out many, many times. I will ask our politicians to give us a daily, almost weekly up date of what goes on in your deliberations. Not 60 days from now, not 80 days from now, but next week. This is a very, very important thing that you have heard. I can't tell you any more of what these people -- please
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Look at me. Don't answer me back, because we are going to get into trouble. I don't really have much more to say, and I want to thank you for coming. I just hope that Mr. Smith, our representative, really keeps your feet to the fire, and gives us our answers quickly, and very quickly. Because you just can't close the hospital and build another one. I'm sorry. Thank you.

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

MS. MACELLI: Good afternoon.

My name is Paula Macelli, and I am representing Borough President Helen Marshall. I have a prepared statement which I would be happy to give except everything has been said either by the colleagues in government or all of you that are here today. I just wanted to
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add one thing that hasn't been raised. That is the entire Borough of Queens has experienced a loss of five hospitals in less than 10 years. We have seen the results of that throughout the Borough. We watched this very closely. We visit our hospitals. We are in touch with the administrations of our hospitals almost on a daily basis. We know the struggles that all of our hospitals are going through right now in trying to meet the demand that has occurred even before the closures, but certainly more intensely since the closures. They are doing a wonderful job. They are doing the best job they can possibly do with the resources that they have.

But what I wanted to mention was that just about four years ago, Peninsula Hospital submitted a request for a certificate of need application for cardiac catheterization, and they were approved. It was granted. So our
question is if it was deemed necessary four years ago that this peninsula have cardiac cat services and other essential services to the benefit of the people that live here, why is that no longer necessary?

MR. HOMISH: Hi guys. Thanks for coming. My name is Kevin Homish.

I'm an x-ray tech from Peninsula Hospital. I can't speak like everybody else does. All I can tell you is some of my experiences that I have had working at Peninsula. I haven't been there as long as long as everybody else in this room. God knows that. These guys have been here for 30, 40, even 50 years, some of them. I see all of my coworkers around me; x-ray techs, lab technicians, nurses, doctors, environmental workers. You name it, they are all here, and everybody in this room in way or the other has used Peninsula Hospital, everybody in this room. Now, I don't know what that
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means to you guys, but if you were
standing where I am, you would
definitely see the light. It is not
about words, and you guys know this
more than anybody, but it is about
action, right. So the only thing you
guys need to do is step up the game,
put the hospital back into action, put
all of us back to work, and we need to
start saving lives again. That's it.
It is that simple.

MS. LAWLESS: Hi. Good
afternoon. My name is Kathleen
Lawless. I worked at Peninsula
Hospital. I live in Broad Channel. I
was a patient at Peninsula Hospital,
and we are all saddened by the closing
of the hospital, and most of us are
shocked because of the circumstances
that have led to that closing. Some of
those circumstances were engineered.
My hope and I think the hope of
everybody here, everybody has expressed
all the logistics, all the numbers, and
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that has all been covered. But I think everyone here hopes that the Department of Health and the government, the Governor, put the hospital as right as fast as they closed. They should open the hospital as speedily as they closed it. There was no reason for this facility to be shut down the way it was, with lack of regard for every person who lived in Rockaway. No one was aware that their doctors wouldn't be there. I worked in the switchboard. We had people calling up hysterically because they didn't know where their doctors were. All of this was pointed out before I realized that, but I just hope that you put as much effort into opening the hospital as you put into closing it. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN ULRICH: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My name is Eric Ulrich. I am a member of the City Council. I represent along with my colleagues in government a large
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portion of the Rockaway Peninsula. I am very sad that we are here today to talk about the closure of Peninsula Hospital. I was hoping that we could have this meeting before the hospital was closed, as was prescribed by law, that was not the case. I am also disappointed that Commissioner Shah didn't see fit to stay past 5:00 p.m., because he is not here. Four hours, in my opinion, is not a lot to ask for when you are a public servant. I sit through hearings at City Hall. Sometimes they go four, five and six hours. He is the Commissioner, he is a public servant, he works for us. We don't work for him. He should still be here. The closure of this hospital has resulted in a health care emergency, and make no mistake, it is an emergency, and we are still feeling the impact of that. Peninsula Hospital is not located in my district. It is in Council Member James Sanders' district.
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But it is the primary hospital that serves most if not all of my constituents from Breezy Point all the way down to the Dayton Towers and every community in between. The closure of the hospital has added critical minutes to every ambulance ride down to the emergency room. As we know in this room, when you are having a cardiac emergency, when somebody is going into labor or when somebody has been hurt badly, every minute counts, and it literally could mean the difference between life and death. Even if one were able to overlook somehow the amount of time required to reach the emergency room at Saint John's Episcopal Hospital, we can't assume that they are going to be able to absorb the amount of patients and the amount of people, especially during the summer months when thousands of people will flock to the beaches, and people will be God forbid will be either
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drowning in the ocean or hurt somehow
on the beach or the boardwalk. We need
a full time medical facility either
centrally located in the middle of the
peninsula or two full time health care
facilities that serve the people of the
Rockaway peninsula.

There are more than 1,000 hospital
workers, many of whom are my
constituents and I know many of whom
are here today. They are now on the
unemployment line. That is not right.
They devoted their entire careers to
public service at the hospital. Some
of them, their whole careers have been
at the hospital. They are ready, they
are willing and they are able to return
to work. There is clearly a need for
additional access to health care.
There is clearly a need for additional
health care here on the peninsula, and
the fact that Peninsula Hospital
remains shuttered with no emergency
room and no plan that we know of to
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meet the health care needs of the peninsula, that is reprehensible, that is unacceptable. The fact that we don't have a plan coming from the Department of Health, that is inexusable, to say the very least. It is disgusting. You can say that, right, it is absolutely disgusting. I realize that everything that has been said already, and I am not here to grandstand. I waited my turn to speak. I was number 27. I want to give a shout out to Phil Goldfeder. He is number 32. He waited too. He didn't cut the line. He is waiting his turn, patiently, like everybody else in this room to speak. But I realize that the decision and the future of Peninsula Hospital is not up to you and Commissioner Shah alone. But know that you play a very important role, and I am asking you to do everything that is within your power to reopen this hospital so that we can start saving
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lives again. Thank you very much.

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

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home. I was called at work by my mother to say that he was having shortness of breath. I told her to call 911. My father was brought by ambulance to Peninsula Hospital. By the time I arrived, he was within minutes of being intubated. He was in respiratory distress. The staff in the emergency room were able to stabilize him so that he did not have to be put onto a respirator. He was admitted, treated and discharged. The staff was highly professional, highly trained, and they saved his life. Now that Peninsula Hospital is closed and Saint John's is often on diversion, I live in fear that when he has a COPD exacerbation, as you know that COPD patients are known to have, that where will he go, what will we do? We are praying every night that he is stable, and we can maintain him at home. I would also like to add that for each of you sitting at this dais, I wonder if
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any of you have hospitals that are
diversion where you live, and have had
hospitals that are closing. Thank you.

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

When you look at the number of schools
that are in this community and the
number of children, young children, who
are at any given time of the days are
in schools and a number of schools that
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are down here, what are we going to
doing about providing the quality care
that is going to be needed in the event
of anything critical happening? We an
increase in kids coming into this
community. We have a rising number of
new families coming into this
community. I hear a lot of people
talking about the senior citizens. I'm
not even going to touch on that. I am
talking about children, who they are
our responsibility as parents to look
after them. If we are not looking out
for our children, what are we going to
be doing about the process moving
forward? There is a lot of things
going on here that we as a community
were completely left out of. To the
point that the hospital is closed right
now, we are still not given the options
that we need. The answers that we need
from the Department of Health are
critical answers for us as parents to
impact the livelihood of our children.
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The mental health issues that are resulting from the closing of the hospital has not been addressed. The staff and what the staff went through because of unfair practices of what happened at the hospital is unheard of. It violated so many ethical and human rights issues that would have dealt with the impacts on individuals who served that hospital 40 years, 30 years, 20 years.

It is unjust and it is not right for us to move forward in a society where we cannot get up and go to work and give our full commitment to work and service our communities without these underhanded practices happening. If we can't set an example right now, what are the examples we are setting to our children moving forward, for them to be fair and just and right in getting up to go to work, to serve the needs as civil servants and people in our communities. So I am asking as a
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parent give us the tools that we need
to secure the well being and safety of
our children and the numbers of schools
that we have in this community, because
we do have a lot of those down here.

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

MR. DISALVIO: Good afternoon. I
apologize for being late.
Unfortunately, the hours that you
picked are ridiculous for those who
work. I am the Assembly District
Leader in the 23rd Assembly District,
and I am very upset, outraged, and
annoyed. If I had my way, I would go
to jail today to prove it, but I
promise to be on my best behavior. I'm
holding the picture of a coffin. This
symbolizes those who have died and will
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die and will die due to the closing of
Peninsula General Hospital. If I might
say, I have to give full disclosure. I
am born and raised in this community.
I feel that Peninsula Hospital, the
people who work there were our family,
okay. Each and every one of the people
who worked there were real. There was
no plastics in this community. As in
many other areas, you go into places
and they are very cold, and they don't
care. They cared.

But let's talk statistics if I might
take time to talk. Saint John's
Hospital, the only hospital you left us
with, has eight CCU beds, coronary care
unit beds. So God forbid any of us
have a heart attack, we are dead, okay,
we are dead. I can go back to 1995,
when my mom, God rest her, was rushed
to Peninsula Hospital on August 12th, a
couple of minutes after midnight. My
birthday was August 11th. She
collapsed. She was in congestive heart
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failure, full of fluids, and she needed
a CCU bed. There was no CCU or no ICU
beds that night. But Dr. Frieda, I
don't know, are you here, Frieda?

Frieda, I love her, God bless her,
should be 100 and still be practicing.

Frieda was in the emergency room. My
mom stayed eight days in that emergency
room. They took such great care of
her, okay. You have no idea. She
needed blood, platelets. My mom had
cancer, and her number was up on her
neck, as they say. Thanks to the great
staff of Peninsula, she didn't die when
she should have died right away. She
lived until January 31st when she
passed. They did a beautiful job.

Just to say eight ICU beds, I am going
to continue, in Saint John's, 12
maternity beds, 144 medical and
surgical beds. 4 neonatal, 6
pediatric, loads of psychiatric beds
for us nuts. A total of 257 beds. You
take our community hospital, you close
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Now I live in Rockaway Park. Any of us who live in the west end of town, as you know today, you see that the streets are closed off. I had to be dropped and walk because you can't park and you can't get around here. They are doing work on the Cross Bay Bridge, they are doing work on the Marine Parkway Bridge. It is a death waiting to happen. So you tell me when I call you I have to go to Kings Highway Hospital, Coney Island Hospital. By the time I get there, I am dead. One of the ladies from community board didn't realize. She went down to Saint John's. The other night, her son had opened his lip and needed stitches. He bled all night. She went into Saint John's and was refused. They don't do that oral there. She had to go somewhere else. It is unacceptable, absolutely unacceptable. What is even more unacceptable that we took our time
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to be here, and Dr. Shah left. That is ridiculous, and I do want to say while I am standing here at the same time, I do want to thank a number of the elected officials who have been there. I want to call those who haven't been there, because each and every day, we had a rally outside of Peninsula during the summer. I think it was like days, in the evenings. Down in the city, I got two buses and loaded the people, and we had a great turnout. I do want to thank Senator Malcolm Smith, Senator Shirley Huntley. I want to thank Joe Addabo and his staff member all the time. I want to thank Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder. I want to thank Councilman Ulrich and Congressman Turner. For those who I didn't call and they are sitting in the room, they should be ashamed of themselves, because they had a rep and they never responded to our community, and they should be voted out of office. You know what, I will call
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their names. Ms. Titus is sitting here with us. Thank you for finding Rockaway, Ms. Titus. I just want to say to you guys please, please, you did it. I am going to finish in one second. You did an RFP which no one knows about. No one knows who is in the running. I know two people who want it that are real. We need this place open. Don't play games with our lives, because we are going to hold all the debts on your hands. Thank you.

MS. KAUFMAN: My name is Marilee Kaufman. I have lived in Rockaway for the past 58 years. I consider myself a life long resident. Last year, unfortunately, I had a heart attack and was rushed to Peninsula Hospital. I had to be stabilized there, and sent to another hospital. If not for the excellent care I received in their emergency room, I would not be standing here before you today. They were an amazing group of people who got on the
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phone, they got my cardiologist on the
phone, they got an ambulance service on
the phone, and they shipped me off to
another hospital to have stents put in,
because they didn't do it. But they
were amazing. It was like a conductor
leading a fine orchestra that saved my
life. Those were the people in the
emergency room of Peninsula Hospital.

To close this hospital is a
catastrophe. I would like to see you
close the beaches and say hey, folks,
we don't have any facilities for you.

What would happen, what would happen?

Close the beaches to the public. We
don't have hospitals for you. If you
drown, you put up signs swim at your
own risk. Too bad, you are going to
the beach at 11 o'clock, swim at your
own risk. The cops come and lock you
up. This is silly. This is a life
saving place. We need this hospital.

It is our lifeline. We cannot be
shipped, as we were told before, to
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other hospitals. There is no time in emergencies.
I have four grandchildren. We live here on the peninsula. I live in Dayton over here, and you know what, there are plenty of elderly. I just turned 71. There are more elderly people than myself here. You what, guys? The reality is the ball is in your court. You have to be the ones that stand up and save us. Make sure there are no deaths on this peninsula because of this terrible situation.
Thank you for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN GOLDFEDER: I appreciate this community because every person and most people have gotten up here and have said thank you to the panelists for coming. I want to be the first one to go on record and while I will get to that, I want to thank every person who came out here today. It is the people in this community who have been out there night in and night out,
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who have written the letters, who have
made the phone calls that got us to
where we are today. Because as many of
you know, we didn't see this day coming
only two or three weeks ago. So we
didn't know where we were going to be
today. I am proud of everybody who I
have stood with to get to where we are
today. So thank you. I want to add
to what others have said, Commissioner
Clancy, and you have been responsive,
but I too am disappointed that Dr. Shah
has not, didn't feel it was important
enough to stay here and listen to the
people from this community. I respect
his expertise, but when it comes to
working with communities, he is no
expert. That I can tell you for sure.
My staff is going to be very angry with
me because they prepared all these
remarks which I am not going to read.
Because tonight, I feel like I need to
speak from the heart. I am here as an
elected official, but I am one of the

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few elected officials that lives on
this peninsula. I was born and raised
here, and now I am raising my two kids
here, and God knows I am afraid. I am
afraid to go to sleep at night because
I don't know what is going to happen in
the middle of the night.

God forbid, everybody heard the story
over the weekend. There was an
accident in Breezy Point, and they had
to take the patients to Brooklyn. How
long did it take? Who could have been
in the back of that ambulance that
needed emergency services and could not
get it? That is the bottom line. We
have 130,000 people on this peninsula,
and that is before the summer season
has even started. Hundreds of
thousands of people are going to be
hurt, are going to be here because they
don't have access to care. One
drowning on the beach takes every
ambulance from this peninsula to go
respond. What happens if something
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else happens? We don't have the
services we need, and nobody to this
point has been responsive to the
community. Nobody has thought about
the people that this going to affect.
We have seen money saving decisions,
economic decisions, all decisions
except for community decisions. I
think it is about time someone starts
listening to this community. Peninsula
Hospital wasn't just a hospital.
Peninsula Hospital was a family.
Peninsula Hospital was caring,
compassionate place where you can go in
and you can feel like you are going to
take care of and get the best
quality of care. Those nurses and
doctors who are here today, I commend
them not just for being here today, but
for years and years and years of real
public service to this community. I
want to close by saying that we have
been fed line after line, after line
after line. I just spoke last week.
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Every year, the Water Board comes out
to talk about water rates, and you
speak and you speak until you are blue
in the face, and they raise it anyway.
Everybody here has made their point
clear. But now we need someone to
listen. We have been given a trustee
who showed clearly that she had no care
for this community. We need a
Department of Health. The goal should
have never been about coming in to shut
the hospital down, and that is what
happened. We need a Department of
Health that is going to work with the
community and most importantly for the
community. Thank you.

MS. HOPKINS: Hello, my name is
Laura Hopkins. I have lived in the
Rockaway community for over 30 years.
We were down south for a few years, and
came back. One of the reasons we did
come back was that I brought my father.
My father is 81 years old, and he was
diagnosed with a lot of different
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things. But the point was I know the high quality service that is available, the health care service that is available here in New York. And so I brought him back, and one of the doctors from Peninsula Hospital was able to figure out that he was misdiagnosed. They were giving him six pills a day for the wrong thing, but he was able to turn that around. Truly, I am giving honor to everyone here and all of the constituents, everyone, the regular people just like me, Assemblywoman Titus and Goldfeder and everybody that is here. This is something that goes across demographic lines. It really doesn't matter if you live in the projects, if you live in a million dollar home. Everybody gets sick. We need this hospital. We can't afford to let it just go away. We have seen what happens in our community and in communities like ours when we let the services go down.
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When I came back after being gone for 10 years, and I saw the grocery story, that was a vibrant grocery store. A couple of blocks from the hospital, there were vibrant little stores there. They are gone now and they are not back, so we can't just assume that we are just going to go ahead and let this hospital go down, and it is going to be that. We have to make up our mind that we are going to do the things that need to be done to get this hospital back.

If you walk down there and see right around that hospital, you see it surrounded by nursing homes. There is about four or five nursing homes right around the hospital. What is going to happen if someone gets sick in this nursing home. Saint John's cannot handle all of this. They just can't. We don't even have to hypothetically think what would happen if we had an emergency. Just last year, we had an emergency, and the Rockaways had to be
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evacuated. Suppose, God forbid, we had
something like that again, and someone
got hurt and we couldn't get off this
peninsula. Then what? What are we
going to do?

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

MS. JOHNSON: Good evening. My
name is Felicia Johnson. I am a
resident of Rockaway. I am also on the
community planning board, but most
importantly, I'm not the expert in the
health care aspect of it. I am a
geriatric social worker, having spent
most of my career, over 26 years as a
geriatric social worker, but most of my
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career here on the peninsula in the
nursing homes. I happen to work in the
nursing home that is attached to Saint
John's Hospital.

I find it very interesting, and I
believe the population statistics that
you may have used based on the Berger
Commission for why you felt that this
peninsula did not need two viable
hospitals was based on population that
was from when Moses had razor stubble.
But if you actually came out and looked
at what is going on out here, we
understand the Berger Commission is
about money. People, please don't get
me wrong, but let's understand that
health care is a business and it is
about the business of money. Basically
what the Berger Commission wanted to do
was to save the money that was coming
out of the Medicaid, Medicare pot. So
they decided from the top of New York
State down to the end of Long Island
how many beds needed to be reduced
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everywhere in order to reduce the amount of money coming out of that pot. That is why they looked at the hospital. They found one thing wrong with it. They said you know what, we can reduce X amount of beds. However, they did not take into account at the time, Auburn by the Sea hadn't been done, Auburn East hadn't been done, they hadn't redone some of the housing developments that are out there. I am not going to talk about killing people health wise. I am not going to talk about that. You have enough doctors and nurses and experts here. I am talking about killing this community economically. Because while we are trying to sell homes and houses and get a tax base here because tax base equals what? Money. Money equals what? Votes. You want to know why votes don't count where we are? Because we have no tax base here. So now you are trying to get people out
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here to buy these homes that are going
to put money into our economy to build
us up, and you are cutting us off at
the knees. Because who is going to
want to buy a house and pay a million
dollars, a half a million dollars for a
house, and have children and bring them
up, and you tell them that you don't
know where they are going to go if
something happens to their children,
that the closest hospital -- we are
right next door to Saint John's
Hospital, and you are telling me that
my elderly residents that I feel like
those are my grandparents, they have to
be diverted to Nassau County, they have
to be diverted to Long Beach, they have
to be diverted to Mercy Hospital to get
care. You know what they are telling
me? I would rather stay here, I would
rather stay here because the hospital
that is supposed to be a selling asset
for a nursing home. You have a nursing
home connected to a hospital. What
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about those residents in Peninsula?
Where are you diverting them to? Where are they going, where are they getting their health care from? So I find it appalling, yet I understand, because the plan that the Department of Health gave us for evacuation pretty much is the same plan you gave us for closing the hospital, which is nothing. There is no consideration for any kind of emergent care, urgent care, any type of care for the residents on this peninsula. You have more drug addicts on this peninsula. What happens, their kidneys fail. You are going to tell me now I can't even get people over to Saint John's dialysis because they have no slots open there. You need beds for dialysis.

What happened to the Certificate of Need that Saint John's put in for that? I don't know. They said it was passed, but we have had no movement. Yet you close a hospital that had dialysis
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stations as well. You close a hospital that actually had a pediatric unit to now have a hospital that has how many, I think like six beds. But yet you want us to try to build this community economically to guess what, put money in your pockets. I really don't understand. I am not trying to be disrespectful, but honestly, I really don't understand where the thinking came from when you were looking at the growth, the population and the demographics of this community. We are isolated, we are isolated, isolated, isolated.

So now you give us one hospital. Tuesday night, we had a community board meeting. I am going to wrap it up. We had a community board meeting, and they were giving us the proposal about the off shore natural gas line, blah, blah, blah, and where they are going to have to drill, and blah, blah, blah, closed on Flatbush Avenue. Everybody's
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Concern was what about the ambulances, please take into consideration the ambulances. What is going to happen? We are going to try to have two lanes open, we are going to try to have two lanes going one way, two lanes going another. What is going to happen?

Guys, honestly, I am so disgusted right now that the Commissioner did not see fit to even clear his calendar. No disrespect to you all. I am sure you are lovely people and you will take all the information back, but if this was a meeting that was set up by him and he agreed to be here, how dare he take a phone call, act like it was so important that he would walk out, and then not even come back. That just shows to me the lack of respect and regard that you have for this community.

My last point while we are talking about money, that I urge my electeds to let's look at the fact why Peninsula
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closed, because you are serving a
population that don't have insurance.
How about we do legislation to get
everybody insured so that when it comes
time for health care, people can get
their health care and the hospitals can
be compensated for the care that they
are putting out. That is what we need
to look at and making sure that
everyone is ensured so that you don't
run into the financial straights that
you ran into with Peninsula with people
being given $10,000 worth of services
and the state is reimbursing you $300.

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

MR. SMITH: Excuse me. I am
Floyd Smith the Third. My father was
Floyd Junior, and my grandfather was
Floyd Senior. I was born in Chester,
South Carolina. We like to say big
foot country, where men are men and the
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sheep know it. I am here representing
the Concerned Citizens of Rockaway,
which I am the Executive Director of.
I am here under false pretenses. I'm
not really concerned that much about
Peninsula Hospital. I am here about
water safety. That is my issue. That
ties in because if you have a drowning
in this area, they are probably going
to come to Peninsula Hospital. If it
doesn't exist, they have no where to go
but Coney Island or Brookdale or Kings
County. Let me tell you, you don't
want to go to Kings County. I have
been there. As you can see, I had a
stroke. I was there, and it was 500
prisoners handcuffed to other officers,
and I waited for two hours. I also had
an incident in March of this year at
Office Max where I got hurt. They took
me in an ambulance to Saint John's. At
the time, the house fell down in the
Rockaways. There were 300 people there
waiting for emergency. I waited five
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hours to see a doctor. So that by
itself gives you an idea of how bad off
we can be if we had an emergency
anywhere in Rockaway. This is Mickey
Mouse to say we don't need two
hospitals. Maybe we don't, but we need
to expand one of them or join the two
together, like it was talked of six
months ago. Because we definitely need
emergency care available. There is the
radiology, which I had a couple of
times at Peninsula is gone now. Then
go to Saint John's. It went away
somewhere. We don't know where it
went. But you have an incident, like I
had a stroke, you have to be treated in
two minutes or three minutes. You are
not going to get to Coney Island or
Brookdale or Jamaica or where ever in
three or four minutes. You're just not
going to do it. None of these bridges
are working when they're not broken
down, or it's not closed or whatever.

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

MS. IRVIN: Good evening. My name is Annette Irvin. I am the chaplain of the now defunct Peninsula Hospital slash Auburn Cancer Support Group. The hospital is not just a hospital to us. The hospital is a part of this community. It is a teaching place. Whenever there is a health fair to be given in this community, we can pick up the phone and say Liz, I need. I need someone to do diabetes testing,
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someone to do high blood pressure testing. The hospital worked with the community to educate the people that live in the community, and the hospital is a part of the Ready Rockaway Plan. What are we now going to do since the hospital is closed? Where are the people who receive their chemotherapy going to go?

My mother passed away in the hospital. She had a very rare form of cancer. They could not treat here, but they could sustain her, do all of her testing, make her feel good when she walked in the door, because people knew her. We are a community that is interictally related. I grew up here, I went to school at 180, I went to Far Rock. There are a lot of people in this room that I went to school with that know that without this hospital, our community will be one that is not accessible for medical care, nor will those houses be sold. Every ad for
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Auburn by the Sea says two hospitals, schools, location to public transit. All of these things were selling points. Now what are we going to do? Our support group, people who would have cancer, that had a place to come to once a month to care and to share our knowledge with each other.

But my biggest issue, my niece just walked in. Last Sunday, she was shot in the leg on 51st Street. She could have done zip and been in Peninsula Hospital, but it is dead. She had to have a 25 minute ambulance ride to Jamaica Hospital. She could have died on her way to Jamaica Hospital. She was an innocent bystander, and received a bullet in the leg. Her neighbor received one in the hand. She was lucky that they could take her. She drove herself, matter of fact, to Saint John's, because she did not want to wait. But my niece could have died in that 25 minute ride. Not only those
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that are being shot, but it hasn't been said, heart attacks. We have one of the highest rates of asthma in children in this city. Another thing. In my previous life, I was the chief of disability processing for Social Security Disability. Saint John's gives the worst records for anyone pending disability that is anywhere in this city. Peninsula's records were succinct. You could tell what was going on with the patient. The ones from Saint John's -- we need this hospital to help with the disability process, to educate and to save lives.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CLANCY: 41 through 45, please.

MR. MARRERO: 41 through 50.

MS. WARDEN: Good afternoon. My name is Annie Warden. I have lived on this peninsula for 45 years. I live in a co-op with 350 families. We live four blocks away from Peninsula
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Hospital. This was a comfort to me and my family, because I have an asthmatic grandson. I don't know if any of you witnessed someone having an asthma attack, but it is horrifying. To be able to get to that hospital in minutes was reassuring. That is why I live there. I am also a member of the Auburn Cancer Support Group. We were relieved when the hospice unit came. That was such a blessing to people who had to use that unit. We cannot afford not to have that hospital. I want my family to live, not to be afraid. We want that hospital, we are appealing to you. I don't know. Last year, when you have an asthmatic person in your family and you have to run to the hospital once a week. To go to that hospital, and the emergency room was always packed, always. The nursing home, the people from the nursing home that have to use that emergency room.

The population on this peninsula has
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grown.

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

MR. SILVERMAN: My name is Normal Silverman. I have been a resident of the Rockaway community for 54 years. As long as my family has been here, I felt that Peninsula Hospital was part of the family. When my father suffered a heart attack in his doctor’s office, the doctor said drive your car a few blocks over to Peninsula Emergency Room, they will take care of you. They did. He was in the hospital for about a week. He got another 30 years of life. I would I
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would hate to think of him trying to
drive on the Van Wyck Expressway up to
Jamaica Hospital or some other place,
because we would have lost him right
then. When my wife had a serious
accident and fell, and had a broken
pelvis and a broken wrist, she asked
for Peninsula Hospital. They took care
of her for a week. I was able to go
back and forth, bring her things from
home that she wanted, and take care.
It was in the community. When she was
a little bit better, I was able to
wheel her in the wheelchair over to the
rehab center, where she was for anotherive weeks, and then came home, and the
problems were taken care of. We can't
have Peninsula Hospital taken away from
us. The State Health Department has
been under pressure over many years to
reduce the cost of medical care and
health care in the State of New York,
and I am sure we all hear about it.
The Berger Commission was appointed
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with the responsibility of saying which places could be closed. They did look at the Rockaways, and they came up with a solution here about adding beds, never about closing any one. They said they see the value of community hospitals, and they should not be abandoned or unnecessarily targeted for closure.

It appears that Peninsula Hospital was targeted for closure. These hospitals tend to be low cost providers, and appear to provide acceptable quality of service. I think that Peninsula was a little better than acceptable, but without it, it is not even acceptable.

A few years ago, the Peninsula Board, in an effort to improve the financial position and services at Peninsula joined with the Medisys Health System. Medisys President and CEO, David Rosen, was known as a leader in the field, and his success at obtaining visible improvements at Jamaica Hospital. Now
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he is known for his conviction for
bribery of State Senator Carl Kruger I
am glad my community is aware of it.
The State of New York has to be aware
of the corruption that has gone on, in
some cases under the nose of the State
Health Department. If we have to do
that to get this solved, I believe we
should be doing that. These people
were convicted of accepting bribes.

What are the bribes for? Jamaica got a
new nursing and rehab center, a new 64
slice CT Scan and a trauma center. If
Jamaica got these benefits from this
arrangement, did Peninsula lose out on
something there that they should have
gotten? The payments were for
something. All parties were under the
supervision of the State Department of
Health, which must approve any major
improvement in hospital facilities. In
the last couple of weeks, I have been
looking at the web site of the State
Health Department. Everything that
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goes on in a hospital for a new
emergency room, I saw even for the new
bathrooms. It has to be approved. How
is this going on during this time? By
the summer of 2011, Peninsula was close
to bankruptcy. Medisys tried to close
the hospital but the Board of Directors
reached out to Revival Home Health
Care.

According to Crain's New York Business,
November 6, 2011, which you can get on
their web site, New York State
Department of Health had no objections
to this. DOH did not formally review
the Peninsula deal, because it
maintains no change in ownership was
involved. The person who was most
involved with this is Steven Zacheim.
Those who are in the field should know.
They allowed this to go on. He had a
long record of legal difficulties in
the health care field. With no
objection, the situation went on until
inspectors came and looked at the lab
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at Peninsula Hospital. I believe at this time, they already had decided that we have to close Peninsula Hospital, rather than decide a case of fraudulent paperwork with the Department of Health, the Attorney General to the U.S. Attorney. They took the punishment out on this community. They closed the hospital here. They could said close the lab and outsource their work. They could have found another lab and sent them in immediately. The staff worked weekends and nights to get it in shape. They never came and checked the lab again. Let the hospital close. I believe within the Health Department, they were more concerned with burying the problem, and in a way burying some of us that were finding the truth and cleaning up the situation.

MR. MARRERO: Thank you, sir.

MR. SILVERMAN: What they have to do is find those who are interested
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in operating some or all of the
hospital, bring them together, bring it
in, and refer other things for the
prosecution that it deserves. Don't
make us the victims of your mistakes.

MR. MARRERO: Thank you, sir.

Thank you.

MS. MCGRATH: My name is
Christine McGrath, and I am here in two
roles. First of all, I would like to
thank you all for having the courtesy
and the respect to remain, to listen to
what this community is telling you. I
hope you are getting a sense of the
loss and the fear and the need that we
have. I am here in two roles. One, I
am a resident. I live down here. I
was born in the old Rockaway Beach. A
while ago, I had a car accident under
the El. Those pillars don't move.
Believe me, I tried to move it and it
doesn't work. I had to be cut out of
the car. I wound up, I had internal
bleeding. I had to have emergency
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surgery. And Peninsula was closed and
I had to be diverted somewhere, I
probably would not be here. Mapquest
says that Coney Island is 32 minutes
away. I don't know where they come up
with those numbers. It must be at 3
o'clock in the morning. Have you ever
been on the Belt Parkway? Have you
ever been on the Van Wyck trying to get
up to Jamaica Avenue? You go no where.
People are going to die. My family
lives down here. I am concerned about
them to. I am also here as a health
care provider. I am registered nurse.
I work in a nursing home down on Beach
17th Street. We have 300 residents.
At least 50 percent of our residents
are bariatric residents. These are
people who weigh 300, 400, 500, 600
pounds. When they start to
decompensate, they need help
immediately. If Saint John's is on
diversion, what is going to happen? 32
minutes on the Belt Parkway? I don't
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think so. Yes, we need to save money, but yet we need to save lives. You can't save money at the cost of lives.

If there is any question about malfeasance or fraud or anything like that, look into it and prosecute the people who have done it. But don't punish the community. Save our lives, please.

DR. DODAKIAN: My name is Dr. Wayne Dodakian. I served my residency proudly at Peninsula Hospital under the direction of Dr. Peter Guiny, who is also here. Thank you, Dr. Guiny. I would like to say first of all that the absence of Commissioner Shah speaks volumes. It shows that he just doesn't care about us. I think if these guys could be here and that lady over there could be there, then he could be here too. If Dr. Shah was here, as I was hoping he would be, I would tell him this. That as a physician, as a fellow physician, I am less than pleased with
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him, and I am actually quite disgusted
with him. Because eight months ago, I
sent that man a certified letter
overnight, begging him to help us get
out of the trouble we were in with
Medisys the first time around, and the
man didn't even have the decency to
reply to my letter. I know he received
it because I called the next day, and
his aide told me it was on his desk.
So he did not even care at that time,
and what makes you think that he cares
now? I think he cares even less now.
So shame on Dr. Shaw for betraying the
trust that we put in him.
Mr. Cook, I feel bad for you, very,
very bad for you. You, sir, I have had
a very bad tragedy fall upon you. He
has closed so many hospitals that he
has become desensitized to the human
cause. He has become complacent,
defiant, and I have to say with
whatever respect is due you, that you
have departed from reality, sir,
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because you don't understand what you
are doing. Mr. Cook will tell you that
he has heard it all before. He will
tell you that everyone says the same
thing. We need the hospital open, we
need the jobs, we save lives. Yet in
his mind, he is saying everyone else
will be absorbed by all the other
hospitals in the area. That is not
true in this Mr. Cook, and I can tell
you why. Because in all the time off
that I have now, being laid off from
the hospital, I spend a lot of it at
Saint John's doing reconnaissance, and
I can tell you for a fact that that
hospital cannot handle the overload in
patients. There are ambulances in the
driveways there are patients strewn
about the hallways. That is no way to
treat patients. That is not a way to
treat the good people that work at
Saint John's. Should not overwork them
like that. That is not a good way to
treat patients and personnel. We all
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know, Mr. Cook, you must think we are
idiots if you don't think we know what
happened here. You simply used the lab
as a tool to close us down because you
saw Peninsula Hospital crawling out of
the ashes, and you didn't like that.
It was not consistent with your plan, sir.

One of the speakers before me said that
the Department of Health became aware
of the corruption. The Department of
Health is the source of the corruption.
Whatever respect I am due to give you,
I give you that, but it is all going to
come out, every bit of it. We all know
what you did with the Medisys group,
with Bruce Flanz, with Mounir Doss and
all the rest of the crooks, and we all
know what you are doing now for Laurie
Lapin Jones. We all know that the
corrective action plan was sent in
inappropriately. We all know that that
corrective action plan would receive a
very bad report from you guys. It was
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sent in on purpose by Laurie Lapin Jones to give you an excuse to close the hospital, and that is just what you did. Shame on you, shame on you. Mr. Cook, I would be yelling at Dr. Shah just as much if he was here, but he hightailed it out of here because he is a scoundrel, and you stayed to face the music. At least I give you respect for that. I really do, but I do not envy you at your time of judgement, because blood is on your hands. Please don't do this. Let Peninsula Hospital open as a hospital. There are several good offers on the table to reopen this facility as a hospital. We do not need an urgent care facility. We do not need another set of clinics. We need a hospital that has 100 beds, so we can meet your old Berger Commission requirements, which are law now, for 400 beds for the Rockaways. It is your own law. Stick to it.

MS. BENJAMIN: After following
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that, I don't know. I have only a few words to say to you, and they are personal words. With my experience, Nurse Rader had told you about the hospice unit at Peninsula Hospital. Unfortunately, my husband was a recipient of the services of that unit. Believe me, the people of Rockaway deserve the right to live and to live well with good health care, but hey also deserve the right to die with dignity.

My name is Lillian Benjamin. My husband was Walter Benjamin. The care that he received from the moment that he entered that unit was unbelievable. He had been sick with cancer, with Parkinson's, and he had a speech impediment, so that made it even more difficult to understand him. He had been in and out of hospitals and rehabs the last few months of his life, and he wanted out. We got in touch with Dr. Grossman at the hospice at

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

COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Thank you.

Numbers 51 through 60, please. Also I
want to remind folks that we do have a
signing service if necessary. Please
make yourself known if you need the
service. Thank you.

MS. KRAUSE: Hi, I am Maureen
Krause. Hopefully, I can get through
this without crying. I have very sick
child, all right. I have a very sick
son. He has diabetes. When I moved
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back here in 2009, I was so excited
that there was a pediatric
endocrinologist at Peninsula. As for
Mr. Muir, we went to the north pole
every that they had it, and it was only
through them that they had a pedes
endocrinologist on this peninsula. Now
there is none, none. My son's doctor
was giving us hints that the hospital
was in trouble. So we switched
doctors. Now I must travel all the way
to Columbia Presbyterian in Manhattan,
and now there is no pedes
endocrinologist on this peninsula. No
pedes nephrologist either. Over the
Easter holiday, over the Easter break,
my son became critically ill, and spent
27 hours in the ICU at Guisinger
Children's Hospital in Danville,
Pennsylvania, who already knew his
records from when he was hospitalized
there in 2008.
What would have happened to my diabetic
son if he was on this peninsula when he
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became critically ill? He would have
had to have been brought to Saint
John's Hospital, and then transferred
out to Schneider's Children's Hospital,
who have no idea what his records are
or what his medical history is. I love
my community and I moved back here to
take care of my mother, who fell down
and broke her hip. And I don't feel
safe here any more.

MR. MCLENDON: I have heard a
lot of passion here tonight, people who
are angry. Wayne, I definitely became
upstaged. That was pretty awesome,
actually. But what that woman said is
without a doubt couldn't be said
better. That should really show your
conscience and your humanity. I guess
Dr. Shah was really excited to go see
American Idol or something. I don't
know why he left. To each their own.
My name is Shawn McClendon. I am a
former employee of Peninsula. I
initially was not going to speak here
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	onight, but I actually spoke to a
cousin of mine earlier, who is a
lieutenant in the big house in Far
Rockaway. He raised something to me
that maybe you guys want to make sure
that you know about it. How the flow
of this hospital and the closure has
already affected everything. He told
me that they are using the Fire House.
He works in the big house in Far
Rockaway, mind you, the largest fire
department that we have on the
peninsula. He told me already that
they are using the fire trucks to help
with patients because Saint John's is
on diversions. So with that occurring
now, without the summer even being
here. As anybody who lives in this
community knows, violence goes up in
the summer, drownings go up in the
summer. We are a beach community. The
ocean is over there. Go take a look at
it. The fact is that this is
completely ridiculous. Truly, I would
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just ask you guys to take a look around you. Take a look in the faces of the people you see here. Look into their eyes and let them know that the sand of Rockaway is not going to be stained with blood, because you are going to let this happen. Don't let it happen. Stand up, be the people you should be, and fix the problem.

MR. BISHOP: My name is Matt Bishop. I am founder and CEO of I GIVE MORE. We are a technology start up that helps non profit organizations raise money. I want to read you a very quick document. We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America. This is the Constitution
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of the United States of America. It is our responsibility, it is the responsibility of the federal government, it is the responsibility of the state government, the local government to ensure the domestic tranquility, promote the general welfare and establish justice in this country.

We are not doing it by closing this hospital or the four other hospitals that have been closed over the last 10 years. So there is no tranquility in this room. There is no tranquility. It is our duty to make sure that this hospital is reopened. This is a community that has worked hard to prevent it from closing, and it is a community that is willing to work hard to make sure that it reopens. So I am here not just to tell you that it is your duty to make this happen. I want to offer a solution. My proposal is that the State of New York provide
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matching funds for money raised in this
community or any other community, five
to one, ten to one, in order to reopen
this hospital. We will do the work.

We will work here if you work with us
to make this happen. I am willing to
commit our technology. I get resources
free of service to help this community
raise money if there is interest in
willing to use it to raise money. To
use on line social media to raise money
for this community, free of services.
So I hope that -- where is the plan,
where is the plan to solve this
problem, not just here with what this
community wants, not just to hear us
after it has closed, but where is the
plan to address the issue? It is not
just that Queens has less than 1.6 beds
per thousand residents. The State of
New York has 3.2 beds per 1,000
residents. That is not just for Queens
County, it is not just for this
community. We need to do something
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about it together, and we need your help. We need the money, whatever it takes to make this happen, and to reopen this hospital. If anybody wants to talk to me about raising money for health care in this community, talk to me afterwards.

MR. JODIS: My name is Jodis. My friends, the person who has given the speech, he told you his speech. Because there is no word, there is no solution of any problem. They don't have a solution of every problem. I don't know. I could not understand why they could not solve this problem. The problem clearly is not created, it is only created by the administration. There was no problem with the hospital. There was no lack at the hospital, and this hospital in 2011 was graded as a zero infection hospital. Why did it close? Closing only the lab on the basis of the paperwork is not right. They can see, where are the
deficiencies? Where are the patients that died because of the tests? The tests were perfectly done. Everything was fine. I worked in the doctor's office. They can see. I faced the inspection two times in 2002 and 2003. They appreciated my work on the machine. They said they never found such a control in all New York. We are the persons who are doing the very precision work. Even our proficiency was never degraded. It was always 100 percent. It was right, and the studies were done, the machine was serviced by the company. The company's men came. The maker of the machine said all right, and all the studies were done. How was that report not right? I was very surprised on this. The same blood on the vial to the labs, and the same result was obtained from the other labs without the reference lab. In September last year, I read the three E-mails to Governor Cuomo about the
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hospital problem. What came of the problem, I don't know why this problem came again. So you are listening to the speeches of everybody coming here. The community needs this hospital.

Don't think I am telling for my job. I am not telling for my job. I am telling for the community, to serve the community. So this is my request. You have to think, you have to decide, there is a solution. And really for any solution we can lend a hand. We can give them money also. We can donate the money, we can contribute the money. This is the money question. I would request of the government that the government should pump some of theirs. To present their ideas with every department to see the expenses. It is the union and everybody, the managers and other persons who are utilizing the money, and there is no recourse. So please, I want the government involved in this case. I
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will tell you Air India is an international airline in India. They are having the crisis of running the international airline. The government has given so many millions of dollars to them. If the government is giving, the government is also making money from them. It is not like they are giving back, but they are giving to save the airline, to save the passengers, to save the employees. You see we are out of jobs. I have not had a job from a half year. My son is unemployed.

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

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

MS. MCKAVAH: Good evening, panel. My name is Queen McKavah, and I am in the district, you New York City is the first largest educational district in America. District 27 where
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Peninsula Hospital lies, is the second largest in New York City. I am not going to quote data. I am just going to say a few things to you, okay. One, I'm an idealist and I'm a visionary. So I'm going to believe that Commissioner Shah left because he got a phone call that he has a meeting that he has to review some new data to find out how to help the situation. That's what I think.

The second thing I'm going to tell you, because my Senator and my Assemblywoman is here. We just built a $50 million wing on one of the oldest building on the peninsula, PS 42Q. State of the art science lab, state of the art arts, state of the arts music, Olympic gym. As we speak, 300 people are sitting in it, celebrating a tournament honoring a young man that was assassinated. That is what I call it when you are shot, and you did nothing. Peninsula Hospital represents in this community
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another choice. I'm Black. I am told
to model the people on the west end.
The woman that came before me, I'm sure
she has a higher credit score than me,
she may even have certain
certifications I don't have. When I
listen to her cry because she did
everything the American dream told her
to do, and she is now scared to live,
which was her community before it was
mine, I have to ask you three consider.
I'm a panel leader in the DOH. I
believe in public hearings. I have
gone to them, I have spoken, and even
Chancellor Walker has reconsidered, and
not phased out our schools that he
thought he had to phase out. Get home
safely.

MR. GREENBERG: Mr. Cook, my
name is Steve Greenberg. I am past
member of the Peninsula Hospital Board
of Trustees. I'm sure you recall about
a year ago when it became apparent to
the Board of Directors that there was
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something very fishy going on with Medisys, our hospital president and the Department of Health. We circled our wagons, because you have been listening to the testimony that these people have been giving all day. I originally was going to say things that everybody said. There is no reason to repeat it.

But the Board of Directors of the Hospital understood one thing. You aren't just closing a hospital. You are tearing the heart of the community out. I always believed that the Department of Health should be looking out for the health and safety of the people, and you are not looking out for the health and safety of the people of the Rockaway community. That is not what is happening here. We were a bunch of amateurs. We didn't know what was going on, but we knew we had to save this hospital. Mr. Zachem, who came in, Mr. and Mrs. Zachem, who came in to the revival and sat with us, and
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did everything they could to
reestablish us. We went to court, we
went to do everything. We actually had
reached the point where the bankruptcy
court approved the plan of closure, of
bankruptcy. We thought we had turned
the corner. People in the community
were happy with what was going on at
the hospital. Then all of a sudden, we
got stabbed in the heart. I saw the
plan of the lab thing that you gave
out, the report on the lab. Time and
again it quoted something happened in
2008, it wasn't fixed. Something
happened in 2010, it wasn't fixed.
Therefore, we are closing. Time and
time again, that is what I saw. What I
don't understand, don't understand,
with any rational thought, I'm a
businessman, a rational thing was okay,
here we have something. People came
in. They are saving the hospital, they
are saving the hospital. Yes, the lab,
in fact, was deficient. I am not
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denying that. Why didn't somebody come
in to make the lab efficient? I just
don't understand. That would seem to
me the cause of action that should have
been taken. But what is done is done.
I believe, I know there are people who
want to keep Peninsula Hospital open.
I still don't know whether or not the
license was pulled. Nobody seems to
know that, yes or no. But I have to
tell you as a person who has lived in
this community and served it in many
different ways, it is very, very
important. We are isolated. We have
the ocean. We have all kinds of things
that can go wrong here. Not only that,
last year, I was made a member of the
Mayor's Task Force, to promote business
and economy in the Rockaways. Last
summer, the Rockaways was getting a lot
of good press. There was a lot of good
stuff going on here. People were
coming down. It was a revitalization
of the community, and this just pulls
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it away. I really think that if there
is a way to reestablish this hospital,
you should consider it and make that
your goal, not a goal to close the
hospital. Thank you.

MS. STAFFIS: Good evening. My
name is Fran Staffis. I am born in
Rockaway, as well as my husband. I am
one of 10, actually, born in Rockaway.
I want to thank you personally for
giving us the courtesy of staying and
listening, not taking breaks. I'm here
a short time. I haven't seen anybody
take breaks. I do think it is
inexcusable that the Commissioner did
leave. Everybody has a busy schedule
and they are trying to make it here
tonight, if they haven't done so today.
I am not going to repeat what everybody
else said. You have heard it a number
of times. I have just a couple of
concerns.
One, for the elderly, for the young and
for the middle aged, everybody has
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emergencies. We had one in my own
family when my grandson had to be
brought to the hospital. He stopped
breathing twice. Thank God his father
was FDNY, and give him rescue breaths
until the ambulance came. He was taken
to the ED, and thank God everything is
good. But what do you do, every second
counts. What if he couldn't make it to
the ED? Then who is going to be
accountable to these people? The extra
time that it takes to get to the
emergency room, to get to the doctor,
where is the responsibility going to
lie? On whose head? I wouldn't want
that nightmare on me. The other thing
I am thinking of is with the hospital
gone, are the doctors going to stay.
Or are they going to leave to go to a
hospital near them? That is another
concern of mine. I asked my doctor the
other day what hospitals is she
affiliated with, and she told me, but
you are not going to make it if it is
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an emergency. So I ask you please to
think of the children, of the elderly.
Even myself, God help me, I don't need
any medical care, but anything can
happen in any second, and that second
will count. I thank you again, and I
wish you a safe trip home. Just out of
curiosity, how far is the hospital to
your residence. So just give us the
same courtesy. Thank you.

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

MS. RENNEHAM: Good evening. My
name is Joan Remmick Renneham. I am a
registered nurse currently working in
Peninsula Extended Care Facility on the
compound of Peninsula Hospital. I
started working down there in 1981 when
I was 20 years old as a student nurse.
I have been there for quite a while. I
have seen it all. My main question for
you is do you know. Do you know what
you have taken away from the community?
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Did you know that there was an audiology clinic housed in the extended care facility that serviced every nursing home in Rockaway, and fabricated their hearing aids? Did you know that there was a full blown dental clinic that did surgery from pediatrics to geriatrics? Did you know that we had a pristine medical education department that helped man every clinic from endocrinology down to podiatry? Who wouldn’t want to be taken care of by a doctor that was just learning and wanted to do it right?

You took this away from the community. You took jobs away from my fellow nurses. Politically correct, I’m supposed to say thank you for being here? In all reality, thank you to the present board that stuck by us. Mr. Buren, Mr. Paucey. Thank you, Mr. Zacheim for trying to get the phoenix to rise from the ashes, and to continue to try to help us. Thank you,
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Lou, and thank you all my fellow
workers and the warriors. As for you
gentlemen, madame, I certainly hope you
sleep very well at night, because what
you have taken away from the community
is a nightmare. Good night.

MS. WAGNER: Good evening. My
name is Margaret Wagner. I am a
resident of Broad Channel, and I would
like to start off by saying that we
have some angels in the room tonight.
Without them, we wouldn't be here. Some
of them are the nurses, and of course
Dr. Wayne, and many others. But I have
formed a relationship with the nurse, and unfortunately, she is not here	onight. Her name is Mary Liz. She is
not here. She is the biggest leader
that I know of in this fight. She is
not a politician. Her name is Mary Liz
and she is in the hospital tonight
with chest pains. She is in South
Nassau, I believe. I don't know the
whole story of what happened, but that
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is very disturbing to everyone. I just
want to personally thank all the nurses
for your hard fight. You have fought
harder than the electeds.

I am very disappointed that we have not
heard a response from the Governor. He
does not have a representative here.

This is a medical crisis, and I would
like it to go on
record that we would want a response
from the Governor before the 60 day
report comes out. Senator Malcolm
Smith, thank you for all your hard
work. You are his ears. Please get to
the Governor and have this hospital
reopened. The hospital has history.

104 years old. We can't afford to lose
this hospital. The hospital made it
through the Great Depression, but it
cannot make it through the corruption
of some politicians. The people want
the hospital to stay, so whatever the
Governor has to do. There is billions,
and I have seen it. Everyone has
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computer access. There is billions of dollars in grants, and a Heal Program. We could go on and on but the money is there. I don't like to say this, but when my intuition tells me that you are closing all these hospitals down, God knows for what reason. We don't know because no one is telling us. Closed doors everywhere we look, everything is shut down on us. Everyone works for us. We are the taxpayers. Why do we have to wait three months for answers? The reporters that are in the room, I would like them to ask for full investigation from the District Attorney's Office. There is fraud, there is corruption. The Medisys CEO was sentenced to I believe three years, and some politicians are also going away. So the corruption is there. I hope nobody on the Department of Health is being investigated. And I hope this doesn't any further than it has already been in the courts. It was Senator
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Carl Kruger who just received seven years, stated to the judge why am I getting seven years, I am not as bad as the others.

Please consider this. Be open with the public. All we do, all we are asking for is answers. If you have a plan, if there is this new beautiful hospital coming down to Far Rockaway for the residents, to help all the new residents, and it is a plan of Auburn by the Sea, all we are asking is do it quickly before people die. Let us know what the plan is, and where the Certificate of Operation is. If that could come out before the report, the 60 days, if you could let us know if we still have a fighting chance, Dr. Wayne currently is working with an attorney to raise funds to keep Peninsula open. So with all the angels in the room, I suggest you see Dr. Wayne. I think we need $8,000 more. We will post it around town. He is suing, and I
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believe in this fight, because if we don't fight, we are not going to get any answers from City Hall. Thank you.

MS. MALLON: Hi, good evening.

My name is Cathy Mallon. I entered Rockaway almost 50 years ago. This here is my great granddaughter, who I have legal guardianship. Keana is her name, and she has a seizure disorder.

I can't cover any pre-K because I have to sit there for the two and a half hours. She has to have a parent when she goes to school. I don't drive. I am solely dependent on Peninsula Hospital. Dr. Shah left. He don't want to hear what the people has to say. I guess the saying goes, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen, so he is gone. Anyway, we need Peninsula Hospital. I know you have heard this over and over again. But what you haven't heard from is anybody mentioning Bloomberg. Where is he? Why hasn't he come? We need
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Bloomberg. He marches in the Saint Patrick's Day parade down our streets ever year. He wears his green, he tips his hat. That to me is phony. We need him down here to see what the hell is going on with the closing of Peninsula Hospital.

We also need a complete, like the lady just said, investigation. By the time it is all said and done, it may not happen today, tomorrow. Maybe a year from now, but you will see them coming with the paddy wagon and a truck full of handcuffs, and haul them all away, including the Department of Health.

You have to, and you must for the sake of the good kids like this that has to walk around with asthma medicine, with seizure medicine, or whatever for the sake of their lives. Look at them.

You go home at night. You hug your grandchildren. You are near a hospital. You have health care, you have everything you need. I don't
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drive. I'm 66 years old. I got
custody of her. I got to look out for
her. I have eight grandchildren, and
who is there for me? Are you there?
Is Dr. Shah there? Did anybody take a
picture of the empty seat? That is
Dr. Shah. He is empty headed, and he
has an empty seat. Do what is right if
you don't want to wind up in Rikers or
where ever. Because eventually it is
going to happen, and I pray to the God
above that anybody that has the nerve
to close Peninsula Hospital will do
their time. We did not do this. The
Rockaway community did not create this
problem. The Rockaway community
depends on that hospital, each and
every one of us. Our lives are at
stake, and the lawsuits that are going
to be filed from the loss of life on
this island, surrounded by water and
two bridges is on your hands. Thank
you.

MS. RYAN: Hello. My name is
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Alissa Ryan. I really have only just something short to say. My aunt is, I was born in Rockaway, my aunt was born in Rockaway almost 100 years ago. She is in the nursing home by Peninsula now. Not only for her, yesterday, I found myself having respiratory problems. And from 10:30 in the morning, I ended up going to Saint John's until 6:30 in the evening, was when I got out. Let me tell you, it was insane, absolutely insane. I felt guilty being there because I was standing up. I could stand up, and everybody else was on gurneys, almost. All over, it was like wall to wall people. When I came in in the morning, it wasn't so bad when I left. Th emergency room, the outside room was packed. I felt bad for them, honestly. When you have so many people like that, and everybody is trying to do the best that they can, they are going to make mistakes too. I don't know if they
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did, but it is easy to make mistakes
when you are so cramped. I really felt
bad for them. I just think whatever
you are doing, it is wrong. The people
in the nursing home, the elderly people
there that have to go to the hospital
next door, they probably don't even
know that it is not there any more. I
don't know why it is closed. It is
insane that it is closed. If it is a
lab thing, you just fix it that is all.
Remedy it and open it up. This is a
poor community. That is the deal, it's
poor. It's not rich, it's a poor
community and nobody gives a damn.
That's it. Thank you.

MS. QUINCERRA: Hi, my name is
Katie Quincerra. I was a nurse at
Peninsula Hospital, but I am now going
to speak for a chemotherapy nurse that
worked at Peninsula Hospital that could
not be here today, because she is
actually trying to find a job. I am
speaking for Janet DiPaulo. She was an
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Oncology certified nurse working in the ambulatory chemotherapy infusion center. Her job entailed working with patients diagnosed with either cancer or a hematological diagnosis. She administered the chemotherapy, and up until the day Peninsula Hospital closed, was doing just that. At the time of the closure of the hospital, the cancer care of this peninsula from Breezy Point to Far Rockaway has become extremely limited. It barely exists. Patients who were treated at Peninsula Hospital must now travel to Nassau County to get treatment, as the oncologist who attended them at Peninsula Hospital has his office and infusion suite there. They can no longer stay in their community and have been displaced outside their city, outside their community. Many of those patients don't have transportation, and some do not with their insurance, so they have to take two buses to get
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there. Is that fair, having a cancer
diagnosis and taking chemotherapy?
What does that feel like? Now they
take public transportation. I am sure
it is an exhausting day. I am sure
that there are more than a few moments
when the side effects of their
treatment kick in, and they are on a
bus. Does that seem fair? I feel or I
should say she feels that the patients
from that unit, and those that have
diagnosis yet to be made have been
abandoned. Not by the doctor who cares
for them, but by the system that shut
them out. How sad for those who needed
us the most, and we are not there for
them. Said maybe is the wrong word.
It is actually tragic.

MR. HANNON: Good evening. My
name is Tom Hannon, and I am here for
the main reason is to share something
with you that possibly you don't know,
or the Commissioner who had to go
somewhere doesn't know, or the
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Governor, Andrew Cuomo. I know his mother, Matilda. She is a lovely lady, and she likes hospitals all over the place. She wants to see people live so they can vote for Andrew. That is true. The thing is I am an ombudsman, New York State trained, with mental hospital long term care and rehab right next to the building that has an inexpensive lock on it in the locked positron. I learned a lot. I volunteer. I don't get paid, but when somebody up in their nineties who looks out a window and cries and says I have children all over the country and I have grandchildren, Mr. Hannon, and none of them come to see me, is love dead, is common sense dead? The tears flow, and I walk away from that woman and that man who belongs to what they call the great generation, God bless them, they are, with wisdom. You can't put wisdom in an envelope in the form of cash. You can't put wisdom in an
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envelope with a W2 form or a 1040. I have learned a lot in my five years over here.

I wasn't going to come tonight, but I was on the Belt Parkway trying to get to Cross Bay Boulevard last night about 4:30. There was an ambulance and a fire engine trying to come too. They couldn't get through. Ambulance transportation, my friends, is obsolete. Think about it. The roads are too. That would be a good way to put people back to work. Have them build two more lanes on each highway immediately, and there are too many cars. It is critical that we think of a different way. I have thought. Many a day I stay up on the fourth floor. They have Facing the Bay, they call it bay, four bay, three bay, two bay and ocean, four ocean, three ocean, two ocean. I look out the window and I see these ships, these vessels coming in to the greatest harbor in the world, New
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York Harbor. My cousin Joe just retired as harbor master. Not many people know about that job. There are military ships out there. I worked for Jimmy Carter, God bless him, the former President. He was a submarine commander. Some of those subs stay out there for almost a year under the water. You can't see them, but thank God they are there. They keep the peace. There is freighters, there is commercial vessels, there is tankers coming in and out. There is also passenger vessels, cruise lines coming out and coming in, right by the door of Peninsula Hospital that is closed up temporarily. My cousin Joe told me when I called him the other night, Tommy, you are telling me there is a heliport in the back of Peninsula General Hospital? I said yes, Mike Bloomberg comes in there a few times with his chopper, with the police chopper when he is late for the parade
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or whatever. Good man, this lady is right, get him down here. He has got so many things on his plate, he doesn't know what's going on. So the thing is we could have a chopper, if someone is out on a cruise line and takes a heart attack, they call the hospital, Peninsula, or fly out a chopper, get the person, bring them back, save their life, okay. The same thing, my neighbor across the street from me, Jimmy Leahey, he is the boss, the manager of John Fitzgerald Kennedy Airport. I spoke to him. What does that say? Don't believe everything you read. This will give the extra funds to the hospital. We can do it. Aer Lingus, Air Italia, Israeli Airlines, all the airlines will chip in. We will be their hospital. We will fly them over here. That is 100,000 people; employees, passengers walking around Kennedy every day. We will fly them in the chopper, because ambulance
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transportation is obsolete. Please, God, get that lock off.

MR. KAZNER: Before I start, does anybody have any Lysol so I can sanitize the mic? I don't want to catch any germs, and not have a hospital to go. No offense to the previous speakers. I will take my chances. I have a doctor over here to help me out. Good evening, everybody. My name is Lannie Kazner. I have been a 35 year resident, 30 year resident, 35 year resident here on the west end. And like I said, I am afraid of possibly getting ill, and not having a hospital to go to. I know a little bit about government, since I work for the City of New York for over 30 years, and I know how inefficiently they do operate. I just addressed the Water Board not too long ago, and their panel or chair people or whatever you want it call them, were a little less stoic than the three of you are. I feel like
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I'm maybe talking to mannequins. I would dismiss all three of you and just keep the stenographer, and he would be a better audience, I think.

Anyway, I sort of have an affiliation with Saint John's, as my wife, who is a life long resident of Rockaway works there for I'm not even sure how long, but over 20 years. As you see, I am wearing NAMY shirt. I just did the walk for them, a three and a half mile walk last Saturday for the cause, and raised over $600 for them. So I am kind of happy I did that. I have been retired for six years, and you know, I am enjoying Rockaway. But again, without a hospital here, my thoughts have changed a little bit, and I was considering moving. But of course my wife, being I have a life long resident, believe me, she will stay here and I will have to go. So I don't think that is an option any more. I'm a little nervous. I'm a better writer...
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than I am a speaker. But the whole background about my relationship with Rockaway, my parents actually met here many, many years ago. My mother lived upstairs. My father's family lived downstairs, and back in those days, they had ice boxes. Of course my mother had the job to take the water tray out of the ice box, and she neglected to do that. There was a leak downstairs, so my grandmother sent my father up, and voila, that is how they met. So we came here every summer and enjoyed the beach. So I have sort of been a life long resident, even though it was part time of Rockaway for a long time. I love living here, I love the beach, but I don't like the situation without a hospital nearby. Saint John's alone is not the answer. It is too far away. It is 20 minutes by car from my home, and that is a little too far, I think. I just had another question about the Commissioner. How
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did he leave here? Did he go by limo,
or did he take an ambulance back to
where he came from? A helicopter?

Taxpayer's money. Again, I was
thinking about getting a new job, so I
just wanted to ask you people up here,
before I go, who do I have to pay off
to get one of your cushy jobs? Thank
you very much, everyone.

MS. ROCHFORD: Hello, my name is
Pat Rochford. I worked all day, so I'm
tired. I won't be long. I want to
talk about transparency, I want to talk
about how on a regular basis in the
Daily News and other newspapers around
town, you hear about hospital
administrators making millions and
millions of dollars. The Cohen
brothers were running YAI. They made
millions of dollars, and apartments. I
want to say is as a taxpayer, all I
know is you're getting a raise year.
This year, it's this tax, this time it
is water taxes. Every time you are
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turning around, we are getting a raise in Rockaway, we are getting a tax, we are getting a tax for this, we are paying higher tolls. All we do is raise money and we lose services. Our transportation is horrendous. To count on a helicopter, and helicopter moving people in and out doesn't work in bad weather when more accidents would have happened. It works if you are the Governor of New Jersey and you have a horrendous accident. Relying on getting somewhere, that works when you are the Governor of New Jersey, but it doesn't work for us tax payers. Our people who work all day to come here to pay higher and higher taxes, just to be witness to the fraud that goes in the administration. I have to tell you I am just so tired of it. When I heard that four people who were the administrators for Saint Vincent Hospital paid themselves over $1 million, and their perk was that they
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had a helicopter to get out to the
Hamptons, you know.
I have to talk from my personal
experience. I work in Maimonides. I
want to tell you our ER used to see 100
people in 2009 a day. Our ER in 2010
saw 200 people a day. Our ER sees 300
people a day in the ER, and we don't
get any Berger Commission money. We
don't any money to pick up the slack.
As we talk about closing Downstate, as
we talk about Kingsbrook Jewish is on
life support, and that is what you
read. Where is it that there is any
responsibility to the people of New
York City other than we are raising
your tax in a different form? Today it
is the toll, tomorrow it is the water
tax. Then it is the income tax. It
just has to stop somewhere. I would
like you to investigate in Peninsula
Hospital, where was the money. What
line did they take the money out to
bribe Kruger? What line did they cover

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that under? We all know that happened, and he is going to jail, but where is the responsibility of the people that we send, or the people that get left because Dr. Shah didn't think Rockaway was important? But where is the responsibility to say we are investigating this, we are going to find out, we are going to put a cap on this? They certainly put a cap on my salary. They certainly do, and that is what I have to say as a taxpayer. I am disgusted. When you hear of this abuse over and over, it's in Kingsboro, $4 million, Saint Vincent's, they have the helicopter. Here we are bribing Kruger. But you know what happened to Mr. Levine. He got a nice job in Flushing Hospital. Thank you.

Goodbye.

MS. PRAWZINSKI: Hi. My name is Phyllis Prawzinski, and I'm a former director of the emergency room at Peninsula Hospital. Just like the
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speaker previous to me who said he is
kind of here under false pretenses,
because he wasn’t advocating for
Peninsula, he was advocating for the
Rockaways, I feel the same way, because
I understand that in my heart, this is
a made decision. I appreciate that you
have come to listen to how you have
affected peoples' lives, and you have
affected the health care. But I for
one do not believe for a moment that
this will change. But I have to come
address all you people who I have
known. I am a relative newcomer. I
have only been here 22 years. I know
that there are so many people who have
much longer and much more prestigious
histories at Peninsula. I was there in
the glory days when we were doing well,
where people were actually stealing
from us, and we didn't even notice
because we had money, I'm going way
back. But to the point now where 20
years forward, we got into big trouble.
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We had a reprieve, we thought for a minute or two, with Medisys for about a day or two. I truly believe they wanted to make us successful, because I didn't think that anybody invested a business to just leach them out. But over the year, year and a half that we were affiliated with them, it became increasingly evident we had to buy from them at exorbitant cost. We weren't getting the things that we needed to run the hospital. By the summer of last year, we were hurting. We couldn't get supplies from creditors. Nobody would extend us credit, and we were going to close, and we made a desperate appeal. We weren't going to just close. We were going to go down as that hospital, that hospital that didn't provide great care, that had deteriorated over time.

In August of 2011, a company stepped in and said we need health care and Rockaway, and we will invest in your
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community and make this the best it can be. That was their motto from the day they came in. In the five months that we were affiliated with this organization and these people, they elevated our practice that we went out on a white horse. When they walked in on February 23rd and said we are closing the hospital because of the lab, I said oh, no, we are winning. We will do whatever it takes to fix that lab and make it the best. They were only there five months. They had to undo literally two years of leaching of resources. Two years, and in five months, there is not a person in this room that didn't see better equipment, more medications, more staff. If it was reasonable, they did it. When they came in and we did all this work, and they allowed this very generous company to probably throw another $100,000, $200,000 at a lab that they were never even going to come in and look at, the
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should have just been honest with us
from February 23rd and said New York
State has a $35 billion budget deficit
involving health care. Isn't it funny
how on April 2, 2012, we were already
in the midst of closing, so I am sure
nobody read it in the paper, New York
State managed to close that down. I am
not saying that Peninsula Hospital was
worth $35 billion. But we were one of
the hospitals that closing us, and it
was about the fact that our patient
population draws the most resources out
of the State of New York. We are one
of those portals of entry into health
care that causes the state to lose
money every day. It wasn't about how
successful we were going to be, because
we were going to run a successful
hospital, because had a successful
company behind us. It was about the
fact that they no longer wanted to foot
our Medicaid bills, Medicare bills,
because that is state funded. Also the
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people that don't have any insurance
who we see also. So I just want to
thank everybody for the great job they
did after supporting this hospital and
knowing that it hurts so much more this
time, because we were running.

COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Numbers 71
through 80, please.

UNANNOUNCED SPEAKER: Hi, Rick.
Well, there you have it. You heard
from the Rockaway community. You heard
sad stories, you heard people living
here for 40, 50 years. But I am very
confused about something. We go back,
maybe eight, nine months. When Medisys
pulled out of Peninsula, I was on the
phone many times with Rick Cook. We
worked very diligently, the Board
Members and myself. The courts then
deemed they gave us a trustee. You
know the story, and the fabulous five
was formed. I live in Rockaway for
the past 22 years, but I was born in
Brooklyn. We have like a little sense
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of something that doesn't smell right.
I say that because for the eight months
that we worked, we came back. We were
fortunate to find the Revival Group.
They were a white knight. In the four
months, they came back, and we had
$33,000 in the black, coming back $60
million. It is very strange that six
days, and I will say it again, it was
six days before we came out of
bankruptcy. Six days that we had a
forensic inspection from the state.
It doesn't smell right. So I asked
you, I said how could this be. This is
the only hospital that I know of that
that has ever been closed because of a
laboratory. If you get a flat tire on
a car, you don't sell the car. You fix
the flat. We fixed the flat. We
worked diligently. These people here
worked diligently day and night to get
that lab up and running. Guess what?
Nobody came to the party. We put in
thousands of dollars to get this lab
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up. We refurbished the entire thing.

We went to court. The Fab Five went to

court, and we represented Nassau

Hospital. The trustee, Ms. Jones, we

sat with her. They made some demands,

we met the demands. They needed money,

we got money, but yet it wasn't

accepted. They didn't like where the

money was coming from. I think there

is something wrong with that. All the

other hospitals that were closing in

New York State were due to money, not

laboratories. We had the finances, we

had the wherewith all. It doesn't sit

right, Rick. So what I asked the

Commissioner, Mr. Commissioner, please

explain to me how with six days to go,

we get an inspection and they find

dirty gloves on the floor or whatever,

silly things. Refrigerators weren't up

to snuff. It was warm in the lab.

That is dangerous. It was off two

degrees. Why six days before us

exiting bankruptcy do we get this
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inspection. Was it maybe that DOH didn't expect us to keep the hospital open for eight months? They are not accepting that part. I have got to bring this report out. I saw the card come up. You say we are going to get a response in 60 days. They are selling off the hospital. They are getting $2,000,000 from all the assets that may be inside the hospital. The RFP is going to come before the 60 days, so we are going to get a report when we don't have a hospital any more. So if you may, I would appreciate some rapid response to our questions. I am sure you heard all that you had to hear. I saved myself for the last. Good luck.

MS. SMALLWOOD: Good evening, all. Good evening, everyone. How are you? My name is Alexis Smallwood, and I am speaking as a mommy, as a worker who worked in the health field, and it is crucial that you keep Peninsula open. My son is an asthmatic, and I
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can't wait to get to Saint John's to
get to him. Not only that, it is small
capacity. Our doctor is a wonderful
doctor, and I'm pretty sure if I look
around this room, I can spot a
Peninsula worker. I just saw a
receptionist. I'm telling you her
right there, every time I go in there,
she is so pleasant to me. I'm telling
you, if you overload Saint John's
workers, I'm telling you patient care
is going to go down. You think people
are tired now and stressed and can't
take the workload. I know that's a
fact because I used to be a worker at
New York Hospital in Queens. I mean
when I say the beds are like this, and
the patients are complaining, and
you're telling them listen, honey,
we're trying to do the best that we
can, but you have got to talk to them
up there who is working that money and
that in Albany and everywhere else who
is representing us, and the
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pharmaceutical companies. Not only that, AJ's leg almost fell off because they're building over there, and all those mosquitoes and the bugs came up and bit my baby. He's like blistered up, and he couldn't walk any more. He was like this. Go upstairs, my baby is treated like a king, a king, and I tell everybody all the time, you better take them vitamins, and you better not jump off that bed, because if you hurt yourself, listen, I don't want to go to Saint John's. It's hot, listen, do not close Peninsula down. I know what it is to work in the health care field, and doctors and nurses, they work very hard to take care of their patients. I know somebody who worked at Peninsula, and right now, she's on welfare being treated like crap at the back to work program. She don't want to be there. She wants to be at work.

MR. STEUBEN: Good evening.
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Thank you. I would like to thank everyone who has been here for three to four hours. I just got here from work.

My name is Peter Steuben. I am a resident on Beach 123. I did a little research and checked out the Berger Commission of 2006, and I apologize because it has probably been discussed all afternoon. But he was commissioned along with David Sanders from the State of New York to review the hospital situation in the state, and come up with their conclusions as MDs and consultants and experts. I would like to read just one or two paragraphs, and then get to their position on Rockaway, because they covered the entire State of New York. Some of their recommendations were for Rockaway. Our health care system is broken and needs repair. It is not too late to structure the care delivery system. Unless we act decisively, again, this report was presented to the State
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Legislature as well as to the Governor.

Further facility closures and
bankruptcies are almost certain to
occur. Moreover the hospitals that
close due to market forces alone may be
the ones most critical to preserving
access. These recommendations will
help to avoid future calamities that
would further destabilize the system
and compromise patient care. That was
presented to the State Legislature and
the Governor in November of 2006. That
is six years ago. A fundamental driver
of the crisis in the health care
delivery system is excess capacity.
The state wide hospital occupancy rate
has fallen from 82 percent of certified
beds to 65 percent in 2004, a decrease
of 18 percent. On a staff bed basis,
approximately one quarter of hospital
beds are currently unoccupied. Here is
the summary. Again, forgive me for
reading. Per statutory obligation, the
commission makes the following
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recommendations, to right size and
reconfigure health care in each region
of the state. The recommendations
apply equitably across all regions.
They address 57 hospitals, or one
quarter of all hospitals.
Collectively, the recommendations will
reduce inpatient capacity by
approximately 4,000 beds, or seven
percent. Twice as many nursing homes
will be downsized as closed. In
addition, long term care
recommendations will create more than
1,000 new non institutional slots.
Again, specifically for Rockaway,
Peninsula Hospital should downsize by
approximately 99 beds, and Saint John's
Episcopal should downsize by
approximately 81 beds. Contingent upon
financing, the two facilities should
merge and rebuild a single facility
with approximately 400 beds. That
sounds imminently rational to me, has
not been implemented. I am sure the
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two hospitals discussed it, but their
egos on both sides, on both staffs,
among both directors and boards. But
this is one peninsula of 100,000
people. One major facility on the
peninsula should be something that the
state should approach to provide some
sort of a structure so this could
happen. Thank you very much.

MS. PALADINO: Good evening. My
name is Laurie Paladino. I am the
administrator at Ocean Promenade Center
for Nursing and Rehab. I am here
tonight to speak on behalf of 120
people that can't speak for themselves,
the elderly. We are a subacute and
long term care facility. I am sure
most people automatically assume that I
am here to speak because I am going to
down with my census, and my beds won't
be filled, but that is not the case.
My beds are still filled. I am
reaching out to Brooklyn, I am taking
patients from Jamaica Hospital, Coney
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Island, Queens, Lutheran, Interfaith.

We started some great programs there that unfortunately we won't be able to offer people if they are being shipped off of the island, off of the peninsula. The 120 residents that live there are not well. Otherwise, they wouldn't be there. They have no place to go except for Saint John's. If Saint John's is on diversion, and I know that they have commented that they haven't been on diversion. But somehow, I send a patient out to Saint John's, and the next day I am getting a call, they are in Jamaica, Brookdale, somewhere else. So I don't know how they got there if they weren't on diversion. So they are getting there somehow.

The island needs to have another hospital. Not just for my patients. I am here to also speak for the 283 employees that we have, most of them living in the Rockaways. If they get
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hurt, they have got no where to take
their family members, their children,
their elderly parents. My director of
nursing's son was hurt recently in a
rugby accident, and she ended up out in
Long Island Jewish. So the need for
the hospital is there, and I am sure
that the Department of Health is very
much aware of that. It is how are we
going to get it back that has to be
worked out. But there is that great
need. These patients need long term
care, but when they are acutely ill,
they need an acute care hospital.
Right now, I have no where to send my
patients. So I need a place to send
them. Please help me. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CLANCY: Thank you
very much. I just want to say that
this is very important. We have heard,
we have learned. We are going to go
back now to Albany and take a look at
what we have learned today. I just
make that commitment to everyone in
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this room, and the folks that have been here, and had to leave. We do make that commitment, that I am going to take this very seriously. Thank you very much for participating in this forum.

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

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ROBERT J. POLLACK