

Resolution to Save Beth Israel Hospital and New York Eye and Ear Infirmary

WHEREAS, on October 25, 2023 Mount Sinai Health System, New York City’s largest hospital network, filed an application with New York State Department of Health to close Beth Israel Hospital by July 12, 2024.¹

WHEREAS, New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald must approve Mount Sinai’s plan to close Beth Israel, likely in consultation with Governor Hochul.

WHEREAS, Beth Israel is the only remaining community hospital for a vast region of Lower Manhattan, from Canal Street to 23rd Street from the Hudson River to the East River. If the hospital closes, this area will be rendered a “hospital desert.”

WHEREAS, in November 2023, nurses, doctors and other concerned employees at Beth Israel Hospital sounded an alarm that Mount Sinai had begun rapidly reducing or eliminating services at Beth Israel absent approval from the New York State Department of Health.

WHEREAS, on December 21, 2023, the New York State Department of Health issued a cease and desist letter ordering Mount Sinai not to further reduce services at Beth Israel absent approval from the Department.

WHEREAS, on January 29, 2024 the Community Coalition to Save Beth Israel and Save New York Eye and Ear prepared a community-led report of how the proposed closure of Beth Israel would impact health equity in Lower Manhattan. The assessment concluded in part that:

- The closing of Beth Israel would have a negative impact on medically underserved residents of Lower Manhattan, especially those who are people with disabilities, older adults (especially frail elderly), LGBTQ+ people and low-income racially diverse residents in the two zip codes from which the largest proportions of Beth Israel patients originate (10002 and 10009).
- The closing of Beth Israel would exacerbate the already inadequate hospital bed capacity in lower Manhattan, where there remains just one full-service hospital (NY- Presbyterian Lower Manhattan in the financial district), following the closures of St. Vincent’s Hospital, Cabrini Hospital and the closure of acute inpatient services at Gouverneur on the Lower East Side.
- The two closest hospitals to Beth Israel – Bellevue and NYU Langone – each have emergency departments serving more than 60,000 patients per year with average wait times for more than three hours and appear unlikely to be able to absorb the 60,000+ patients who have used Beth Israel’s emergency department annually.

WHEREAS, on February 7, 2024, the Community Coalition to Save Beth Israel, Save New York Eye and Ear and a diverse group of other community-based plaintiffs, including the Center for Independence of the Disabled, the Fulton Houses Tenants Association, and the Elliot-Chelsea

¹ <https://www.mountsinai.org/files/MSHealth/Assets/MSBI/MSBI-Closure-Plan-PFI1439-with-Cover-Letter.pdf>

Houses Tenants, filed suit against Mount Sinai Health System and the New York State Department of Health. The lawsuit argued in part that Mount Sinai is closing Beth Israel Hospital without requisite authority, and that closing the hospital would violate state and city anti-discrimination laws, particularly with respect to people with disabilities, Asian and Hispanic New Yorkers, New Yorkers facing language access barriers, and low-income New Yorkers. The lawsuit further sought to compel the Department of Health to deny Mount Sinai Beth Israel's closure application.

WHEREAS, on February 9, 2024, Judge Moyne of the Supreme Court of New York in New York County granted a Temporary Restraining Order preventing Beth Israel from closing services without the Court's approval.

WHEREAS, the closure of Beth Israel Hospital would profoundly deprive 400,000 community members living in Lower Manhattan of convenient access to hospital based care, creating an untenable position.

WHEREAS, New York Eye and Ear Infirmary (NYEEI) has a storied tradition of providing specialized eye and ear care for patients in the Lower Manhattan community. However, in 2013, Mount Sinai began managing NYEEI and has since eliminated a suite of critical services from the Infirmary, including emergency services, in preparation for what appears to be a closure of NYEEI in its entirety.

WHEREAS, seniors and patients with disabilities are disproportionately represented in Lower Manhattan and rely on both Beth Israel and NYEEI for a broad spectrum of health services within a safe, navigable distance from their homes. Depriving them of manageable access to general hospital services provided by Beth Israel Hospital in addition to the specialized care services provided by NYEEI is unconscionable.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the undersigned community organizations, call on Governor Kathy Hochul and State Health Commissioner James McDonald to step forward and provide assertive public leadership to:

- Keep Beth Israel open as a full-service community hospital for Lower Manhattan, whether operated by Mount Sinai Health System or another entity.
- Assure that residents and workers in Lower Manhattan have local access to the full array of community hospital services, especially for time-sensitive emergency care, childbirth, and psychiatric crisis.
- Create a formal public comment and community consultation process about the future of Beth Israel Hospital and New York Eye and Ear Infirmary.