



**TESTIMONY BEFORE
NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS
2021 STATEN ISLAND ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING**

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021

**PREPARED BY
MICHAEL SCHNALL
CANDIDATE FOR NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
49TH DISTRICT, STATEN ISLAND**

Good evening Chair Pagan and Dr. Katz. My name is Michael Schnall and I am a candidate for New York City Council running to represent the 49th Council district, covering the north shore of Staten Island. Thank you for this opportunity to testify at the New York City Health + Hospitals annual public meeting in Staten Island.

First, I want to thank Robert Nolan for the many years of advice and guidance he's given me, and his continued willingness to share his wisdom. Thank you to Dr. Vincent Calamia for representing Staten Island on the H+H board, and for taking time to talk and share with me as I educate myself on how H+H can better serve Staten Island.

As someone who has worked on all sides of New York City's budget battle, I know how important these hearings are for smart, thoughtful and informed decision-making, that inevitably impacts the health and well-being of New York City's millions of residents.

I want to begin my statement by being crystal clear: New York City Health + Hospitals has a long way to go before accomplishing its mission on Staten Island. And I'm here tonight to help clarify what I believe are the next steps for H+H to accomplish that mission.

NYC Health + Hospitals' mission is very clear: it is the public safety net health care system of New York City. It is charged with three goals: To extend comprehensive health services equally to all New Yorkers; to promote and protect the health, welfare, and safety of the people of the City of New York; and to partner with communities to promote and protect health in its fullest sense: the total physical, mental and social well-being of the people. I believe H+H has fallen short on every goal here on Staten Island, but I know we can work together to improve and fulfill those goals.

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Over the last two decades, Staten Islanders have been distracted by messaging from candidates and elected officials alike that Staten Island MUST have a public hospital. Even this year's crop of Mayoral candidates have started saying the same. I am here to deliver a different message. Having worked for the City for over 14 years, I know how long it will take to rehabilitate or build from scratch a new hospital. And from what I've learned recently, if a new public hospital were to be built here, we'd surely lose one of our non-profit hospitals.

Knowing this, I'd ask this board to consider something different: **H+H can provide services to Staten Islanders, in lieu of building a new public hospital, and bring those services directly to Staten Islanders.**

Let's claim the value of that hospital and its services owed to this borough, and bring new and innovated services like telehealth, in-home doctor visits, and mobile services. I'm not asking H+H to create these services from scratch since you already provide them in other boroughs.

I believe that in a post-pandemic world, government will work best when we bring services to the taxpayer. With an inadequate transportation system leading to the longest commutes in the nation, Staten Islanders need a little help reclaiming time. Providing these services closer to home will go a long way to improving our borough's quality of life. H+H can play a real and meaningful role in improving the health and wellness of Staten Islanders, and can start now by bringing service to the people in a comprehensive way.

I live to serve New Yorkers who are underserved and under-represented, and I know you all do too. I implore this board to keep working to fulfill your mission of service to 8.4 million New Yorkers, and look forward to being a partner with you in helping fulfill your mission.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I look forward to listening to my fellow Staten Islanders tonight as they share their concerns and opinions. I encourage everyone to stay safe, continue to wear a mask, socially distance, and get the vaccine when you become eligible.

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