

1 NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SENIOR SERVICES
2 OFFICE OF LEGAL AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

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IN REGARD TO:

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CERTIFICATE OF NEED
APPLICATION FOR THE
TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF
SAINT MICHAEL'S MEDICAL
CENTER

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PUBLIC HEARING

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New Jersey Institute of Technology
Theatre at Kupfrian Hall
99 Summit Street
Newark, New Jersey

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Friday, February 29, 2008
6:30 P.M.

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17

18 BEFORE:

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THE STATE HEALTH PLANNING BOARD

20

JUDY DONLEN, Chairperson
DR. SHAROL LEWIS, Board Member
CONNIE BENTLEY MCGHEE, Board Member
WILLIAM CONROY, Board Member, Representing DHSS

21

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23

24

SHARI K. GRIMSGAARD
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER

25

1 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Good evening.

2 Does this work? I'm just trying to give Ray the

3 indication that we're getting ready to start up.

4 Good evening. My name is Judy

5 Donlen. I'm the Chair of the State Health Planning

6 Board.

7 Joining me tonight on my left is

8 William Conroy who is Assistant Commissioner of the

9 Department of Health and Senior Services.

10 Also in attendance are members of the

11 State Health Planning Board, Connie Bentley McGhee

12 and Dr. Sharol Lewis.

13 This is a public hearing of the State

14 Health Planning Board in relation to the transfer

15 of ownership of Saint Michael's Medical Center.

16 The Department deemed the application complete and

17 in accordance with the requirements of law. The

18 State Health Planning Board is required to hold a

19 public hearing on this application within 30 days

20 of this action. Adequate notice of this hearing

21 has been published in accordance with the

22 provisions of N.J.A.C. 16:28-15.8.

23 Notice was sent to the Secretary of

24 State who posted the notice in a public place.

25 Copies of the hospital's Certificate of Need

1 Application to relocate are available for review at
2 the Newark Public Library, the New Jersey State
3 Library in Trenton, and the Department of Health
4 and Senior Services.

5 The information gathered at this
6 hearing will be reviewed by the State Health
7 Planning Board, in addition to reviewing the
8 application from Saint Michael's and the Department
9 staff's analysis and recommendations in a public
10 meeting.

11 Although not all the members of the
12 State Health Planning Board are present this
13 evening, this community public hearing is being
14 transcribed and the transcript, along with any
15 written comments that are submitted tonight, will
16 be made available to all board members along with
17 the transcript and written submissions prior to the
18 meeting to review this application.

19 There will also be limited time
20 available at the next public meeting of the State
21 Health Planning Board to hear from members of the
22 public. The applicant will be present to present
23 the application and answer questions that the board
24 members may have at the March 6th, State Health
25 Planning Board Meeting.

1 In the interest of making efficient
2 use of the time for tonight's hearing, each speaker
3 will be limited to three minutes. If you have
4 longer written comments with you, please provide
5 copies to the board and they will be added to the
6 record.

7 Anyone interested in speaking should
8 sign in on the speaker sheet at the entrance to the
9 auditorium. And I will tell you that the speaker
10 list right now, the number of people who have
11 signed up far exceeds the number of people we'll be
12 able to hear tonight. So, I'll go back to that in
13 a minute.

14 Anyone who wants to submit written
15 comments after tonight's hearing and before the
16 board meeting is urged to do so. Such comments
17 must be submitted no later than March 4th and
18 should be addressed to the State Health Planning
19 Board in care of the Department of Health and
20 Senior Services.

21 Ray? Is Ray back there? Can you
22 turn down the lights?

23 A VOICE: I think you need to talk
24 closer to the mike.

25 MR. CONROY: Does anybody have

1 control over the Stage lighting because the
2 lighting is blinding us up here.

3 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: We need the
4 lighting turned down and I need the volume pitch
5 turned down because it's getting metally. It's way
6 too loud.

7 For those of you who are unfamiliar
8 with the Certificate of Need process, the State
9 Health Planning Board will vote on the
10 recommendation as to the decision on this
11 application. It is submitted to the Commissioner
12 of Health and Senior Services.

13 The State Health Planning Board is
14 part of the process and your comments will be
15 considered as we review the issues related to the
16 State Health Planning, hospital and related health
17 care services and access to health care services.
18 Your comments are an important part of this process
19 and will be considered, along with all the
20 materials that are submitted by the applicant.

21 The board can recommend approval of
22 the application, approval with conditions, or
23 denial of the application before us.

24 The commissioner will make the final
25 decision on the application after the board makes

1 its recommendation which mostly likely will be on
2 March 6th, this Thursday.

3 As I mentioned a few minutes ago, we
4 have people who have signed up and we have the
5 list. This is about the Saint Michael's
6 application. Although I realize that they are all
7 intertwined, if you are here to talk about the
8 application -- the applications for Columbus
9 Hospital and Saint James, there will be other --
10 there will be public hearings that follow this.

11 Two weeks from tonight is the hearing
12 for Saint James. That will be at the Holiday Inn.

13 A VOICE: Hilton.

14 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: The Hilton.
15 That will be held at the Hilton.

16 So, if you know that that's the
17 application you want to speak about, if you will
18 give up your time to speak tonight we may be able
19 to get to the people who want to speak about Saint
20 Michael's. I realize they are intertwined, but we
21 may be able to find a way to get through more
22 people tonight if other people defer to two weeks
23 from now.

24 The first person on the list, the
25 first person who will be asked to speak -- I'll set

1 the timer for three minutes. We will set the
2 meeting up for two hours from now. There will be
3 two hour's worth of comments since we're starting
4 late. I will give you a signal at 30 seconds.
5 I'll try to interrupt you around 30 seconds and
6 I'll say you have 30 seconds. If you ignore me, it
7 doesn't matter, when the thing starts to beep, I
8 will gavel you.

9 We won't be responding to any
10 comments tonight, but we will take all the comments
11 that you make and it will be part of our
12 deliberative process next Thursday.

13 The first speaker is Albert Coutinho.
14 I know I murdered the last name. So, if you
15 recognize it in any way, shape or form, shout it
16 out.

17 ALBERT COUTINHO: Madam Chair,
18 Members of the Board, good evening. My name is
19 Albert Coutinho. I'm an Assemblyman for District
20 29 which covers all three hospitals involved.

21 Let me just briefly put a few
22 comments on the record. First of all, I am
23 supportive of the Catholic Health East application.
24 Unfortunately, given the circumstances and the
25 alternatives to these communities, this is without

1 question the best alternative we have.

2 That being said, I think it is
3 imperative that the board report back to the
4 commissioner and to the governor and the state
5 legislature for that matter, the irregularities
6 that have plagued this process.

7 I'm deeply troubled by the fact that
8 this process only began basically two months ago
9 and the financing agreement was in place six or
10 seven months ago. I would ask that the State
11 Health Planning Board support changes to a proposed
12 early warning system will be coming through down the
13 road.

14 As relates to the specific
15 application that you have before you tonight, I
16 think it is very, very important that you condition
17 this approval based on commitments that Catholic
18 Health East has made to the Saint James community,
19 and then to a lesser extent what's going on in
20 Columbus. Unfortunately, the process in Columbus
21 has already started.

22 While I know that we're talking about
23 Saint Michael's, the very fact that money which is
24 being used from the state is going to wipe out
25 debts from Cathedral and the other hospitals, this

1 is going to affect Catholic Health East's ability
2 to perform continuing services at the other
3 hospital. It's more than fair that the community
4 members from Columbus and Saint James are here this
5 evening.

6 So, in fact, I believe that's another
7 problem with the system. The system does not call
8 for this sort of situation when you have three
9 hospitals simultaneously going bankrupt.

10 So, I think it's very important while
11 I support Catholic Health East, I believe they have
12 been a good partner, obviously I wish we could have
13 gotten many more services for the East Ward
14 community, I'm still hopeful we can get more for
15 the North Ward community. It's very important that
16 -- there is a lot of money, over \$100 million being
17 put into this application. Some of that money
18 could go to Saint James and Columbus to continue
19 services there.

20 So, I'm going to give up the rest of
21 my time because I want the residents to speak, but
22 I think it's very important that this board
23 transmit to the commissioner and the governor the
24 problems and the holes in this process so we change
25 it going forward for other institutions across the

1 state. And then when you approve Saint Michael's,
2 you keep in mind the commitments that are going to
3 be made in Columbus and Saint James, and what
4 recourse is there if at least you don't condition
5 this approval on those approvals.

6 Thank you very much. Have a good
7 evening.

8 (Applause)

9 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Would you ask
10 the guy in the back if he can turn down the bright
11 lights? They are way too hot. The red and the
12 blue can go.

13 When you come to the microphone, if
14 you will state your full name and spell your last
15 name for the stenographer.

16 RENEE STEINHAGEN: Renee Steinhagen,
17 S-T-E-I-N-H-A-G-E-N. Good evening. I'm the
18 Executive Director of New Jersey Appleseed Public
19 Interest Law Center. Prior to and since the
20 enactment of the Community Health Care Assets
21 Protection Act, New Jersey Appleseed has sought to
22 ensure that New Jersey regulators act to protect
23 the public interest upon the sale or merger of
24 nonprofit hospital by ensuring that charitable
25 health care assets remain in the community to which

1 they were dedicated, and requiring the commissioner
2 to determine that there will be no adverse impact
3 on the affected communities' access to quality,
4 affordable health care.

5 I appreciate that this is the first
6 of three CN applications concerning the sale of
7 Saint Michael's Hospital, Saint James Hospital and
8 Columbus Hospital to an affiliate of Catholic
9 Health East and that the CHAPA hearing regarding
10 this sale will occur on March 14th. But I feel it
11 important to place my comments in the context of
12 New Jersey Appleseed's goals when participating in
13 these public hearings.

14 In the past, the Board of Health has
15 given serious consideration to the public comments
16 and concerns that have been expressed during its CN
17 hearings and has been very responsive.

18 New Jersey Appleseed especially wants
19 to express our appreciation for this board's, and
20 former Commissioner Jacob's actions, most recently
21 with respect to the sale of Bayonne Hospital and
22 the sale of Mountainside.

23 However, the board's track record
24 over the past two months with respect to Barnert
25 Hospital, Passack Valley and now the sale and

1 closure of Saint James Hospital and Columbus
2 Hospital gives us great pause. The state simply
3 cannot be passive and permit acute care facilities
4 to close their doors without ensuring a real, not
5 merely apparent, public process that ensures proper
6 discussion, coordination and planning among all
7 providers in an area, not just acute care
8 facilities, consumers, legislators and other
9 stakeholders to ensure that not one person is
10 denied access to adequate health care at any given
11 time.

12 In this instance, permitting Catholic
13 Health System to start closing Saint James Hospital
14 the day it filed its CN application to close that
15 institution is simply unacceptable. The state knew
16 about this proposed transaction as early as July of
17 2007 and has been talking to the applicant since
18 that time.

19 Specifically, we understand upon
20 review of the CN application before us that the
21 State has not already agreed to the closure of all
22 acute care facilities at Saint James Hospital and
23 Columbus Hospital as part of this transaction, but
24 also has made it a condition of its issuance of
25 bonds in an amount of up to \$253 million to finance

1 the acquisition and renovation of Saint Michael's.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thirty seconds.

3 RENEE STEINHAGEN: I'm going to try
4 my best. Notwithstanding the State's overall plan
5 to reduce the number of acute beds in Newark and
6 northern New Jersey, the specific conditions set
7 forth in the financing memorandum do not
8 contemplate closure of these facilities before a CN
9 for closure has been secured.

10 I would like to continue and express
11 my genuine concern laying out here what your
12 obligations are and they clearly are not being met
13 here. And I am specifically --

14 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: You can give us
15 the thing. It's only the three of us. You can
16 give it to us.

17 RENEE STEINHAGEN: But I specifically
18 want to urge you here just -- I want to urge the
19 department to take immediate action to compel --

20 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: I understand we
21 already have a copy up here. So, they are on the
22 record and you'll have them.

23 RENEE STEINHAGEN: All right.

24 Thanks.

25 (Applause)

1 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Naresh Rana and
2 that will be followed by Matthew Speester and
3 Richard --

4 NARESH RANA: Good evening my name is
5 Dr. Naresh Rana, R-A-N-A. I represent the
6 Coalition to Save Columbus Hospital. The coalition
7 is a group of doctors and community members who
8 come together to assure that area residents have
9 convenient and affordable access to needed quality
10 health care.

11 From the document submitted we
12 understand that the transfer of ownership of Saint
13 James and Saint Michael's Hospitals to Catholic
14 Health East rests upon the closing of Columbus and
15 threatens access to essential health services.

16 We are here to ask that this process,
17 which seems to be moving at an unprecedented rapid
18 speed, be slowed down until appropriate independent
19 studies are done and an optimum plan for the future
20 of health care services for the entire Newark area
21 is approved.

22 For more than 70 years, Columbus
23 Hospital has been a fixture in this community. It
24 is a busy, vital and essential facility that serves
25 a thriving urban population. It has an 80 percent

1 bed occupancy rate; sees 250-300 pediatric cases
2 per week; delivers 900 babies each year; performs
3 7,600 operations annually and handles 29,000
4 emergency visits per year.

5 The hospital just recently received a
6 five star rating for maternity care excellence from
7 HealthGrades, ranking in the top 10 percent
8 nationally and received the highest score in the
9 State for surgical infection reduction FROM Best
10 Practices.

11 Less than five percent of its
12 patients receive charity care. Less than 10
13 percent receive Medicaid, and 47 percent are on
14 Medicare. The rest are covered by HMOs.

15 Columbus Hospital is not a
16 money-losing venture. Indeed, a recent independent
17 audit of the hospital's books by CBIZ KA Consulting
18 Services, LLC, projected that the hospital would
19 turn a profit of \$1.6 million in they year 2008,
20 and that would trend upward as high as \$3.1 million
21 in the year 2012. This would leave the hospital
22 debt free by the year 2011.

23 We are convinced that the closing of
24 the Columbus Hospital will create a public health
25 care crisis in the North Ward and surrounding

1 communities.

2 The impact of thousands of new
3 patients on the already highly-stressed remaining
4 hospitals would overburden the system and reduce
5 the quality of care provided.

6 Local residents will have to travel
7 further, wait longer and would perhaps delay
8 critical medical care as a result.

9 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thirty seconds.

10 NARESH RANA: For these reasons, we
11 urge the department to act cautiously and
12 deliberately. We ask that you take all actions
13 necessary to ensure that the process is fair,
14 transparent, and effectively captures the best
15 interest of the patients.

16 We ask that you consider first and
17 foremost the needs of the people over the
18 Archdiocese's decision to get out of the hospital
19 business as soon as possible.

20 That's all.

21 (Applause)

22 NARESH RANA: I have 10,000 petitions
23 to submit.

24 (Applause)

25 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Okay. Put them

1 there on the desk.

2 Any written materials you can put on

3 the end of the desk after you speak.

4 MATTHEW SPEESLER: Thank you. I

5 appreciate the board hearing me this evening.

6 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: State your name

7 and spell your last name.

8 MATTHEW SPEESLER: My name is Dr.

9 Matthew Speesler, S-P-E-E-S-L-E-R. I'm a pediatric

10 hospital and attending physician at Columbus

11 Hospital, as well as a physician in the clinic.

12 I am deeply concerned about the

13 inpatient care at Columbus Hospital. Columbus

14 Hospital has approximately 27,000 emergency room

15 visits a year, in which 43 percent are pediatrics.

16 Our inpatient unit has approximately ten to 15

17 patients hospitalized at any one given time.

18 At this point, acute care hospitals

19 in the area cannot handle our pediatric patients.

20 And recently when we had to transfer acute patients

21 that we couldn't house at Columbus both at Clara

22 Maass and Beth Israel and University Hospitals,

23 they could not accept our patients.

24 I think this was a tremendous

25 travesty to the patients that we needed to

1 transfer. These transfers are not accepted.

2 I have a real problem with patients

3 that are three, four and five months old that come

4 in with fevers in excess of 104 that need to have

5 sepsis workups and spinal taps and we have no place

6 to put these patients.

7 In our clinic we have approximately

8 300 hundred patients a week. Out of those

9 patients, most of those patients walk to the

10 hospital, they have no other means of

11 transportation, there are no other services that

12 are nearby. The services at Saint Michael's which

13 were transferred to Columbus a number of years ago,

14 including pediatrics and obstetrics are now housed

15 at Columbus Hospital. I see no indication that

16 these services will be provided at Saint Michael's

17 Hospital.

18 We are in desperate need of

19 inpatient, acute inpatient beds, and I ask the

20 board to consider this as an extreme priority when

21 they go about deliberations and especially when it

22 involves Saint Michael's.

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause)

25 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Richard Pizzaro?

1 After that will be William Chenitz and a Carmella

2 Fleischman.

3 A VOICE: I would like to give my

4 time to Mary Paone, please.

5 (Applause)

6 MARY PAONE: Good evening. I'm Mary

7 Paone, P-A-O-N-E. I'm the infection control

8 practitioner in the Columbus Hospital, and I've

9 been a very happy employee of Columbus Hospital for

10 over 30 years. I'm glad I have this opportunity to

11 speak to you tonight because --

12 A VOICE: Speak into the microphone.

13 MARY PAONE: -- I've taken the

14 opportunity to read the entire Reinheart commission

15 report. And I wanted to applaud the people who

16 served on the commission. The report is very well

17 done.

18 Unfortunately, what the report calls

19 for we're not ready to do because every single

20 chapter of that report calls for transparency in

21 the New Jersey State Department of Health,

22 processes in New Jersey's Department of Health

23 decision making, and you're not ready for

24 transparency because if we were ready for

25 transparency on January 30th, when Maria from the

1 Department of Health met with Heather Howard and
2 representatives from Catholic Health East, she was
3 told the City of Newark could attach questions to
4 the Certificate of Need, but they could not see the
5 answers.

6 Where is this transparency in the
7 public interest in that statement?

8 (Applause)

9 What's going on here? I read it, the
10 entire Reinheart commission report, and I'm telling
11 you the presumption that New Jersey has too many
12 hospital beds is wrong.

13 A VOICE: That's right.

14 (Applause)

15 MARY PAONE: We do not have too many
16 hospital beds. We may have hospital capacity, but
17 we do not have hospital capability.

18 Every day in the State of New Jersey
19 between ten and 20 percent of our beds are occupied
20 by patients requiring isolation. Those beds are
21 not available for use. It limits our capacity to
22 take in patients. And this is why in hospital
23 after hospital patients are waiting for four and
24 five days in the emergency room. There is no room
25 for them. And if you're waiting for this health

1 care crisis to happen in New Jersey. It's here.

2 It's now.

3 (Applause)

4 And your indifference and your

5 absolute insistence of cronyism, corruption and

6 corporate greed is just beyond --

7 (Applause)

8 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thirty seconds.

9 MARY PAONE: -- conscience. It has

10 to stop. Let's bring out transparency. Let's give

11 the public a list of all the special waivers that

12 have been given to all the special facilities in

13 the past ten years. Let's put us all on the same

14 board, all right. Let's have the same playing

15 field. Because if you look at the numbers that are

16 quoted in that Reinheart commission report, they

17 are pretend. They are not real.

18 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: That's it.

19 MARY PAONE: Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: William Chenitz

22 and then Carmela Fleischman and Walter Halms.

23 WILLIAM CHENITZ: I thank you for the

24 opportunity to speak to you.

25 A VOICE: Use the microphone.

1 WILLIAM CHENITZ: I thank you for the
2 opportunity to speak to you this evening. I am Dr.
3 William Chenitz, C-H-E-N-I-T-Z. I am an attending
4 physician at Saint Michael's.

5 I've been at Saint Michael's Hospital
6 since 1973, approximately 35 years. I'm
7 Vice-President for Medical Affairs. I practice
8 nephrology and I'm Director of the Artificial
9 Kidney Unit there.

10 I'm not going to talk about the
11 regrettable situation that has developed at
12 Columbus and Saint James. I know there will be
13 hearings about those things and I promise not to go
14 to those hearings and talk about Saint Michael's.

15 We're going to talk about Saint
16 Michael's this evening. I'm going to tell you how
17 things have developed. I want to tell you about
18 the hospitals that are dying in our area.

19 I've been here for 35 years. The
20 last 15 have been terrible. We've seen closures at
21 United, Saint Mary's, Orange, West Hudson,
22 Irvington General, and now tragically Saint James
23 and Columbus closing.

24 There will only be three hospitals
25 left in the City of Newark, Beth Israel, University

1 and Saint Michael's. And I'm tell you that the
2 proposal for the takeover by Catholic Health East
3 will be necessary so that we are not left
4 tragically and dangerously with only two
5 functioning medical centers.

6 (Applause)

7 In the past few months Passaic
8 General and Barnert have closed. Hospitals are
9 dying because of the free care given for millions
10 of dollars a year, and yet we barely are paid
11 enough money for supplies. There is no money for
12 capital investment.

13 Saint Michael's alone in the City of
14 Newark can't even imagine at this point building a
15 parking garage. And without a parking garage,
16 people with the wherewithal to come to our
17 facility, not everyone in Newark takes the bus,
18 every bus, anyone with the wherewithal to even
19 drive to our facility for care is hard pressed to
20 find a place to put your vehicle. Our employees
21 are bused from miles away.

22 The dialysis machines in my own unit
23 are down. So, that instead of carrying 71
24 patients, we can now carry 40 some odd patients.
25 We do not have the money to repair the machines.

1 Thanks to the financing that's starting to trickle
2 in from Catholic Care East we were able, on the
3 promise of things to come, to arrange for
4 additional machines to dialyze our patients.

5 We need --

6 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thirty seconds.

7 WILLIAM CHENITZ: -- capital
8 investment to survive. We don't want to die. We
9 can't afford to be left to die. This deal has to
10 go through. Thank you.

11 (Applause)

12 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Carmela
13 Fleischman.

14 CARMELA FLEISCHMAN: My name is
15 Carmela Fleischman, C-A-R-M-E-L-A,
16 F-L-E-I-S-C-H-M-A-N.

17 Five to 13 minutes. It is five
18 minutes to 13 minutes to the closest hospital.
19 That is leaving Columbus, coming down to this area
20 to Saint Mike's, to University, to Saint James, to
21 Clara Maass. That is with no traffic. That is
22 traveling on the lovely paved roads of Newark.

23 Okay. There is absolutely no way
24 that anyone can survive with these time
25 constraints. \$130 million to fix up Saint Mike's,

1 and 120 million from the State bond for operations

2 and debts of Saint James and Columbus.

3 If they are talking about closing

4 Saint James and closing Columbus, where is the

5 operational cost?

6 Saint James -- or excuse me, Clara

7 Maass and Saint Mike's are already on divert. They

8 have been on divert for several days now. They

9 can't handle it now.

10 The charity care issue, Columbus

11 Hospital is only five percent charity care as it

12 was written before. We're able to survive. We

13 don't need the State's charity care if run

14 properly.

15 And finally, and it's the truth, even

16 criminals have a right to be heard on judgments and

17 decisions.

18 Why aren't they made more public?

19 This official meeting, this public meeting was in a

20 small portion of The Star Ledger that, as you can

21 see by this lovely turn out, more people should

22 have been here tonight.

23 Thank you very much.

24 (Applause)

25 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: I'm calling your

1 names out telling you you're next so you can be
2 started up at the end of the other one so we can
3 move faster.

4 Next is Walter Halma and then it will
5 be Sara Lobman.

6 WALTER HALMA: Good evening. My name
7 is Walter Halma, H-A-L-M-A. I would like to take
8 this opportunity to express my beliefs on why the
9 proposed acquisition of St. Michael's Medical
10 Center at Catholic Health East is so important.

11 It is no secret that the present
12 financial situation is under great stress with the
13 probability of closure within the next three to
14 six months without help. In the current situation
15 it is difficult to get much needed supplies for
16 patient care from our vendors. Our past bills are
17 all overdue and our vendors are very reluctant to
18 continue to support us. It is getting difficult to
19 turn patient services around faster when the
20 equipment is down for long periods of time.

21 With the assurance and promise of
22 Catholic Health East to influx millions of dollars
23 into Saint Michael's, our vendors will be able to
24 shift supplies faster and repair medical equipment
25 quicker with the knowledge that payment of their

1 service is coming within a reasonable amount of
2 time. This is essential for the proper care of
3 patients.

4 With this much needed financial help,
5 our doors can remain open to treat our surrounding
6 communities.

7 I've worked in the field of medicine
8 for 30 years. The first 29 in a middle class
9 community hospital. My first few weeks at Saint
10 Michael's Medical Center was a bit of a culture
11 shock. I've worked closely with my staff and
12 observed them provide treatment to all patients and
13 I soon became very proud to be part of Saint
14 Michael's.

15 (Applause)

16 The best way to explain this is when
17 an Armenian patient wanted to speak to a
18 radiologist supervisor. In Armenian she made it
19 very clear to me that they were a family with no
20 medical insurance and of little financial means,
21 but with tears in her eyes she wanted to make sure
22 that I knew that my staff treated her and her son
23 with the respect and dignity that every human being
24 should be given.

25 So, the message is simple. We at

1 Saint Michael's do not care who you are, what you
2 look like, what you do, what you believe in. We
3 will treat you with compassion, respect, dignity,
4 and the professionalism that every human being
5 deserves. That's what we do and that's why we're
6 here. Thank you.

7 (Applause)

8 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Sara Lobman and
9 then after that there is someone whose name is hard
10 for me to make out. The last name looks like
11 DeLato. My guess is it's a physician. If you
12 can't claim the name by next time, then I'll give
13 the phone number. It's somebody who wanted to
14 speak about Saint James.

15 Is Sara Lobman here? Is that you?

16 Are you coming up to speak?

17 Is that Sara Lobman? No, okay. Now
18 we're up to DeLator. All right. Here is the phone
19 number 973, it looks like 465 or 665-3953. No
20 claimers?

21 All right. If you think you had
22 signed up and I didn't call your name, let me know
23 in about ten or 15 minutes that you're here, by the
24 time we get finished with this page.

25 Alice Schreiner? No. Maria Barret?

1 Maria Barrett? Silvena Pinho.
2 A VOICE: Veno?
3 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: No. Are you on
4 Monroe Street?
5 A VOICE: Yes. 63 Monroe Street.
6 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: That's you.
7 You're next. And then the next one will be Nancy
8 Zak. And after Nancy Zak is Gunwart Guron.
9 A VOICE: I'm sorry, I no speak
10 English very well.
11 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: That's okay.
12 Just give your name and spell your last name.
13 A VOICE: Thank you. I'm --
14 (unintelligible).
15 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Can you say your
16 name and spell your last name?
17 A VOICE: I'm sorry.
18 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: That's all
19 right. From the mike, stay there.
20 A VOICE: I'm sorry, I'm --
21 (Unintelligible)
22 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Do you have a
23 translator?
24 A VOICE: Can you translate for her,
25 please?

1 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Can you help
2 her?

3 A VOICE: I can help.

4 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Great. First
5 get her name and let's put it in the record.

6 THE INTERPRETER: Silvena Pinho is
7 here name.

8 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Can you spell
9 her last name?

10 THE INTERPRETER: P-I-N-H-O.

11 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you.

12 THE INTERPRETER: I'm here to express
13 my feelings about Saint James Hospital. I have a
14 daughter 27 years old who was born there. I'm
15 really worried about it. I've done my treatment
16 and I had surgery and whatever I needed, I would go
17 to Saint James Hospital.

18 I was also admitted to the fifth
19 floor for cardiac problems, and so my husband, too.
20 And I'm really worried because if we get a heart
21 attack, and until the ambulance comes, might be too
22 late. The transfer to another hospital, being
23 taken to another hospital might take too much time
24 considering the traffic. I don't know if our lives
25 will be safe.

1 That's why I feel really worried
2 about me and about all those in need in my
3 community. Thank you very much.

4 (Applause)

5 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you.

6 NANCY ZAK: Nancy Zak, Z-A-K. I live
7 in the Ironbound section and I am here because I'm
8 really concerned about this entire transaction
9 which involves three hospitals.

10 The way it's going about it seems to
11 be completely not the way it's supposed to be
12 happening and against State regulations.

13 We have not had a public hearing
14 about Saint James. Saint James is the first
15 hospital that's closing. It's closing now. The
16 services are being removed as we speak. Floors,
17 entire floors are closed. Beds are closed.

18 The public has had no opportunity to
19 speak to the State about this and it is wrong. It
20 is a question to me of utter shock.

21 (Applause)

22 When a hospital closes, the public
23 hearing is part of the first process of closing.
24 Why is our hospital closing without no public
25 hearing? It's outrageous.

1 (Applause)

2 How are we to get here through the
3 traffic? People are around and it's impossible to
4 move around in this city because of an arena,
5 because of everything else that has been shoved in
6 here.

7 (Applause)

8 I think it is a question of
9 environmental justice because our community is a
10 poor community. It's a community of non-English
11 speakers. You can't tell me this would be
12 happening in Roselle or --

13 (Applause)

14 A VOICE: That's right.

15 NANCY ZAK: The process should be
16 fair. This is not fair to the people, to the poor
17 people, to the black people, the immigrant people
18 in my neighborhood.

19 (Applause)

20 I don't think this question should be
21 resolved until the process is resumed in the proper
22 way. And immediately those services should be
23 stopped from closing until we can figure out how
24 this is going to be taking place.

25 We have people who have known about

1 this since June. Where is the planning for this
2 transaction to happen in a way that people can
3 understand and know what they are supposed to do
4 and what's going to replace it?

5 There is no guarantee that CHE is
6 going to provide all the lovely things that were
7 announced the other day. It's not in writing
8 anywhere. We have no guarantee. And in two years
9 after the State requirement, that emergency room
10 will be gone. This is a case of really misguided
11 and unjust procedures and --

12 (Applause)

13 (Chanting "Save Saint James")

14 (Chanting "Save Saint James")

15 (Changing "Save Saint James")

16 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: We can go on,
17 but then less people get to speak. We're only
18 staying two hours. So, I understand your concern,
19 but you can either get heard in your public comment
20 or you can get people at the mike, but we can't do
21 both.

22 Next is Gunwart Guron and then
23 Virginia Treacy.

24 GUNWART GURON: Good evening
25 everybody. I am Dr. Gunwart Guron, last name

1 G-U-R-O-N. I'm a hematologist, oncologist. I'm
2 the chief of the department. I've been at Saint
3 Michael's Medical Center for the last 15 years.

4 Before I say anything, I want to make
5 one thing very clear. I can feel the pain and
6 relate to what my colleagues from Columbus and
7 Saint James are going through.

8 I want to say that the health care
9 environment presently is neither patient friendly,
10 nor physician friendly. So, here I am just to make
11 a point about St. Michael's Medical Center from my
12 experience practicing there for many years.

13 Why I think that this ownership, this
14 transfer of ownership to CHE is crucial for Saint
15 Michael's is because from my perspective as a
16 practicing hematologist, I can tell you that Saint
17 Michael's is a state and federally funded
18 hemophilia center. We take care of patients with
19 bleeding and clotting disorders. These patients
20 have very unique needs. We were founded 30 years
21 ago.

22 The patients in Newark in particular
23 are financially challenged. Many of them are
24 uninsured. We have been providing care to this
25 community for so many years. When our patients are

1 in some of kind of a bleeding emergency and they
2 are taken by ambulance to a neighboring hospital, I
3 can't tell you how many times, it's hard for me
4 even to remember I get calls that they want us to
5 talk to the, you know, physicians over there
6 because of the unique needs or they don't have the
7 factors that are needed to take care of these
8 patients.

9 So in summary, I think this is
10 something unique, a unique service that we provide
11 to patients at Saint Michael's Medical Center.

12 From my perspective, these patients
13 will suffer a lot if this ownership is not
14 transferred, or if Saint Michael's future is in
15 jeopardy.

16 And again, the second point I would
17 like to make is that Saint Michael's also has a
18 state-of-the-art cancer center which was founded
19 just like five years ago. And we have radiation
20 oncology and medical oncology side by side. It's a
21 nice facility and patients do like to get
22 everything done at the same place at one time. So,
23 it is convenient.

24 And I think in view of all these
25 things I would strongly recommend the transfer of

1 ownership of Saint Michael's to CHE.

2 Thank you very much.

3 (Applause)

4 VIRGINIA TREACY: Good evening. I'm

5 Virginia Treacy. My last name is spelled

6 T-R-E-A-C-Y. I'm the Executive Director of JNESO

7 District Council One of the International Union of

8 Operating Engineers, and I have represented the

9 nurses and professional employees at Saint

10 Michael's since 1980, and Saint James since 1997.

11 I want to reiterate what I have heard

12 several speakers say this evening. I'm quite

13 familiar with the CN process, and I think to try

14 and analyze or respond to the document you're

15 having a hearing on this evening without having

16 seen Saint James and Columbus documents is like

17 trying to find a needle in a haystack or responding

18 in a vacuum.

19 You cannot analyze what that CN

20 application means without those two other documents

21 to be reviewed.

22 (Applause)

23 Specifically, the cover letter makes

24 reference to the Reinheart report and I was

25 privileged to serve on one of the subcommittees and

1 I'm privy to that report and again to reiterate,
2 transparency is not what's being done here. And
3 while I realize the recommendations do not have a
4 force of regulation or statute at this point, it's
5 evident that the intent of that report and the
6 intent to the Governor for recommendations was to
7 allow for public input. That has also been denied
8 in this situation.

9 To allow for public hearings the day
10 before Saint James closes is a shell game on the
11 community of Newark.

12 (Applause)

13 We no longer have the pleasure of
14 representing Passaic General, PPI Regional Medical
15 Center and now the only surviving hospital in
16 Passaic, St. Mary's. And the closure of all the
17 competition and more than 50 percent of the acute
18 care beds in Passaic has still not permitted that
19 institution to make financial sense of itself. It
20 operates with less than five day's cash with no
21 other hospital in Passaic. And there is no
22 assurance that the same thing won't happen here.

23 The patients need to be cared for
24 regardless of the environment.

25 Tonight when we're done I invite you

1 to participate. Walk down three blocks to Saint
2 Michael's in the emergency room where they are now
3 on critical care divert with four admissions to the
4 intensive care unit lined up in that facility
5 waiting for beds that they do not have.

6 Thank you.

7 (Applause)

8 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Cell Cirne
9 Neves. This time I think I killed your first name,
10 but...

11 CELL CIRNE NEVES: Hello. My name is
12 Cell Cirne Neves, C-I-R-N-E, N-E-V-E-S. And I am a
13 Senior Vice-President with Cathedral Healthcare
14 Systems stationed at Saint Michael's Medical
15 Center.

16 Previously and for ten years I had
17 the privilege to serve as the administrator of
18 Saint James Hospital, and during that time we have
19 expanded ED, received license for psychiatric
20 services, and extended prenatal.

21 Catholic Health East announced that
22 it will maintain these services at Saint James
23 under the license of St. Michael's Medical Center.
24 We have to accept the facts. And we understand
25 from what we know, that Saint Michael's as well as

1 its two sibling hospitals are near bankruptcy.

2 That being the case, I stand before
3 you today to underscore how fortunate we are to
4 have Catholic Health East extend its services to
5 Newark, to all the Newark neighborhoods.

6 In addition, St. Michael's Medical
7 Center is working to bring onboard as many
8 attendees and employees of Columbus and Saint James
9 as can be accommodated depending on the services.
10 Without Catholic Health East, there will be no
11 jobs.

12 I urge you to give full and expedited
13 approval to Catholic Health East for purchase of
14 Saint Michael's Medical Center. This is our only
15 hope, and it's the only hope for Newark and its
16 neighborhoods to continue catholic health care in
17 the City of Newark. Thank you.

18 (Applause)

19 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Isabel Costa.
20 And after that will be Rocco Tutela and Ajit Shah.

21 ISABEL COSTA: Good evening. My name
22 is Isabel Costa? I'm the patient rep. and the
23 community liaison for Saint James.

24 I moved to Newark 25 years ago and I
25 got involved with Saint James. It breaks my heart

1 to see the hospital close. It's just a sad
2 situation.

3 Let me tell you something. For the
4 past three years without these hospitals Newark
5 would be bleeding to death. We have needs that
6 cannot be, you know, maintained because there is no
7 money. The care, sometimes we don't even give the
8 care, provide care because we lack supplies and we
9 lack lots of necessary things for the hospital.

10 In my opinion, and in my mind I thank
11 God that Catholic East came. Because if Catholic
12 East did not come, we all would be denied treatment
13 in next week.

14 Saint Michael's Medical Center has
15 been a system hospital for so many years. It's a
16 fine hospital. I, myself, have been there many
17 times. It's a hospital with fine physicians. I'm
18 positive that Saint Michael's will take very good
19 care of the people of the Ironbound who do need
20 medical assistance. I have no doubt about it.

21 So, I really and truly am grateful
22 that Catholic Health East came to save all of us.
23 Thank you.

24 (Applause)

25 ROCCO TUTELA: Dr. Rocco Tutela. I'm

1 a physician at Columbus Hospital, T-U-T-E-L-A.

2 Where? Where is the public health
3 impact study that were gone through all this --

4 (Applause)

5 -- that are needed to determine the
6 districting of beds if that is a problem. At
7 Columbus Hospital which services the North Ward,
8 there is 150 beds. Saint James which services the
9 East Ward, there is 100 beds. Beth Israel services
10 the South Ward, 400 beds. Why does the Central
11 Ward need 800 beds? Three hundred from Saint
12 Michaels and 500 from U.M.D.N.J. and you're
13 virtually eight blocks away from each other.

14 The next point. Right now at
15 Columbus Hospital ICU and CCU is completely
16 occupied. The hospital beds right now at Columbus
17 Hospital are 90 percent occupied. Columbus
18 Hospital has 9,000 admissions a year. Has a length
19 of stay of 6.59 days. Has a charity care of five
20 percent. Has 29,000 emergency room visits a year
21 which is third in the City of Newark next to Beth
22 Israel and U.M.D.N.J., up to 79 acute care
23 hospitals in the State of New Jersey.

24 According to the Department of Health
25 ranking of health quality care in the State,

1 Columbus Hospital ranks number one with regard to
2 surgical infections, number nine in the State with
3 regard to treatment of --

4 (Applause)

5 Number 12 in the treatment of
6 congestive heart failure and MIs.

7 Of the 40 hospitals in New York and
8 New Jersey with a five star rating for clinical
9 maternity care, Columbus Hospital is in the top ten
10 percent.

11 (Applause)

12 In June, '07, a viability analysis
13 independent study of consulting services was
14 performed and showed that Columbus Hospital can
15 stand by itself as a freestanding facility without
16 the help of other hospitals.

17 Now, all of these people that are
18 talking about the care and taking care of patients,
19 but what happens to the 14,000 pediatric clinic
20 visits at Columbus Hospital? There are 1,000
21 obstetric women at Columbus Hospital. Clara Maass
22 doesn't want them. Saint Mike's, they don't want
23 them. East Orange doesn't want them. So, a woman
24 in North Newark that is pregnant or has a pediatric
25 visit that is needed has to take three buses, one,

1 downtown Newark, one across Newark, and one to get
2 to their own U.M.D.N.J. and Beth Israel. Thank
3 you.

4 (Applause)

5 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you. Then
6 it will be Walter Elliott and Aretha Hill-Forte.

7 AJIT SHAH: My name is Dr. Ajit Shah,
8 A-J-I-T, S-H-A-H. I'm a staff physician at
9 Columbus Hospital, Department of Nephrology which
10 takes care of the kidney patients.

11 At present we are managing close to
12 about ten patients every day and statistically
13 close to a thousand treatments every year. I do
14 not think they can go to one of the hospitals. I
15 do not think that these dialysis patients and the
16 dialysis treatment can be sought in any nearby
17 hospitals. That's number one.

18 Number two. I really thought that
19 when we were involved Columbus and Saint Michael's
20 Hospital, I thought that we had medical tie. I
21 really think they are strong in tradition, but in
22 reality, they really strain the vitality and
23 (unintelligible).

24 As we can see some of the speakers
25 already mentioned that Saint Michael's Hospital

1 really not being in reality -- sorry, in reality

2 Saint Mike Hospital is not running well. Columbus

3 Hospital is being excellently run. It's a

4 profitable establishment in the area and it has

5 been painted as it was not (unintelligible).

6 So that I really feel that how do you

7 expect strong vital hospital to be attached to a

8 weak hospital? And we really want the answer. We

9 really want the answer from maybe the councilmen,

10 maybe the mayor or maybe the governor because it is

11 not fair for the people who are being affected in

12 the hospital and the community. Thank you.

13 (Applause)

14 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Isabel Costa?

15 ISABEL COSTA: I was there already.

16 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: You were, okay.

17 I couldn't remember. I didn't check you off. I

18 wanted to be sure I got to you.

19 ISABEL COSTA: Do you want me to go

20 again?

21 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Walter Elliot?

22 And then Aretha Hill-Forte.

23 ARETHA HILL-FORTE: Good evening. My

24 name is Aretha Hill-Forte. I'll spell it H-I-L-L,

25 F-O-R-T-E. I'm director of cancer screening at

1 Saint Michael's. I have been an employee there for
2 three years. Our team of dedicated, talented
3 professionals ask for your support for this
4 transaction. This will be an immense contribution
5 to the provision of vital continuing care as you
6 can hear from all the professionals here in our
7 area.

8 The cancer screening program provides
9 cancer screening to people of limited means and in
10 Newark and its neighboring cities we have a lot
11 with limited means. With the foster care and
12 supportive environment, our results are self
13 evident, The screening of 6,800 women a year, and I
14 mean screening them with funds from the State of
15 New Jersey and from the City diagnosing 65 breast
16 cancers and 12 prostate cancers. By the way, we
17 don't have funds to pay for that.

18 Our referral base has been growing
19 and it's growing strong, but we would like to see
20 it stronger as we anticipate a future in the work.
21 Thank you.

22 (Applause)

23 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Monica Coelho
24 and Reverend Weirich, I think it is, followed by
25 Josie Punca and Sheryl Munoz.

1 REV. MOACIEN WEIRICH: Yes, I'm
2 Pastor Moacien Weirich, W-E-I-R-I-C-H, and I also
3 am present here because I want -- and I need to say
4 it's not easy to get people out because I mean
5 everybody is pretty busy, and especially talk about
6 seniors if you've got a cold day. But we had, on
7 February 19th we had more than 700 people crying
8 out right there in front of hospital.

9 Then we went out to Trenton on
10 February the 7th. We had 100 people there crying
11 out. Then we went right from the Department of
12 Health and cried out.

13 Now, how can Department of Health
14 explain that you organized hearing for Saint
15 Michael's which includes the deal of the closing of
16 Saint James and Columbus, and we don't have hearing
17 for our hospitals? That's -- you know, the
18 community is seeing that.

19 I think as a clergy leader, one of
20 the biggest sins is omission. Oh, yes. The
21 hospital is losing money. Yeah, hospital is
22 problem, they are closing down the place.

23 We have new arena a couple of blocks
24 away from the hospital. We have another arena
25 being built right there across the river in

1 Harrison. We have the NJ PAC here. We have a
2 population that during the day is close up to one
3 to 1.5 million people that are around.

4 Do we need another September 11th to
5 show that we are not prepared?

6 (Applause)

7 I say this because I know that the
8 poor people of our neighborhood don't count anyway.
9 They don't count because we are here tonight, we
10 came out 700 on cold day. We went down to Trenton.
11 Yeah, we'll have a hearing Saint Michael's and
12 maybe a day before the hospital has closed, yeah,
13 you're going to have the hearing.

14 Are you serious? Are you serious?

15 A VOICE: That's right, Amen.

16 (Applause)

17 REV. MOACIEN WEIRICH: That's not the
18 way you treat the community. That's not the way
19 you treat the seniors that give their life for
20 these communities, that pay taxes. That's not the
21 way you treat them.

22 (Applause)

23 And don't tell me that unfortunately
24 we have nothing to do with that. This hearing
25 tonight, you know, how come assemblyman -- our

1 assemblyman, had notice on Monday, he needed to run
2 after the Department of Health. I don't now how he
3 find, but you know who talked to him, somebody from
4 Cathedral Health Care System said, yeah, the
5 hearing will be, I think, the 29th.

6 How come they're the ones directly
7 interested in the deal, how they know about it, but
8 the community that's here who started it doesn't?
9 How come we don't know about it?

10 (Applause)

11 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Okay.

12 JOSIE PUMLA: My name is Josie Pumla,
13 spelled P-U-M-L-A. I want to stress that it's not
14 just a store that's closing, it's human lives that
15 we are dealing with. You have to have a feeling.
16 You have to have a care. You have to have
17 compassion, whoever you are, whether you work in
18 the Department of Health, whether you work in the
19 State Department because these people have feelings
20 in this community that you have to care.

21 You keep on telling us it's financial
22 distress, financial distress, but you don't go and
23 find out the root or the cause of the financial
24 distress.

25 (Applause)

1 It's mismanagement, all people have
2 worked in the hospital and that's why every
3 hospital is bleeding. But it's all self-inflicted
4 that's being done and nobody, nobody even checked
5 them. They will take them into account on what
6 they do. Instead they take all the poor people
7 because they don't have insurance. They are on
8 charity. That's all they care about.

9 (Applause)

10 So, you have to make a loan to punish
11 these people who are begging us mismanagement in
12 this corporation because it's the greatest sin they
13 do with the lives of other people. Thank you.

14 (Applause)

15 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Sheryl Munoz and
16 then it will be Victor Monterrosa.

17 SHERYL MUNOZ: Good evening. Sheryl
18 Munoz, M-U-N-O-Z. I would like to point out Saint
19 James Hospital public hearing is held a day before
20 closing March 15th. It's too late. Our physician
21 and staff have transferred out three weeks ago.

22 (Applause)

23 We are officially closed today. CCU
24 is officially closed.

25 But my main point is according to

1 Saint Michael's Certificate of Need, Saint
2 Michael's only added 20 beds. How is this going to
3 supply the loss of beds from the closing of two
4 hospitals? Saint James which has 103 beds and
5 Columbus Hospital which has 210 beds, a total loss
6 of 300 beds.

7 (Applause)

8 How is 20 beds supposed to supplement
9 the loss of 313 beds?

10 Thank you.

11 (Applause)

12 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: After that will
13 be Emily Passoa.

14 VICTOR MONTERROSA: My name is Victor
15 Monterrosa, M-O-N-T-E-R-R-O-S-A. I think this is a
16 shame. This whole complete process, it's very
17 shameful. It's a very big audience.

18 (Applause)

19 I want to begin by saying just like a
20 lot of people have brought up, there are a lot of
21 people who are faceless that are not properly
22 represented.

23 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Excuse me. The
24 transcriber needs to hear you. We really want you
25 on the record. So, can you turn so she can see you

1 and can you just slow down slightly.

2 VICTOR MONTERROSA: Starting off with
3 the poor, starting off with the people who are
4 blamed for using charity care and Medicare. Many
5 times it has been stated and stated statistically
6 these aren't the people who are bleeding the
7 hospital to death, but at the same time these are
8 the same people, according to Governor Corzine, who
9 are not going to be getting any type of health care
10 in the near future.

11 (Applause)

12 And there won't be any local
13 representation from the people (inaudible) who are
14 students in the Ironbound or any part of Newark who
15 should be working in these same hospitals once
16 these hospitals close, due to this being blamed due
17 to mismanagement. We don't know what's really
18 going to happen, but we do know it's shameful.

19 First of all, why is there a public
20 hearing now? It has been said the hospital is
21 already closed. Our hospital is already gone. Why
22 is there going to be a hearing one day before the
23 hospital closes? It makes absolutely no sense.
24 That's pandering, that's hypocrisy, that's deviant
25 and that's beguiling. Something needs to be done

1 about that.

2 Why is Saint James mostly closed?

3 Why is there no hearing before that? Because the

4 community isn't taken into account in any part or

5 any level. We're talking about doctors, we're

6 talking about workers, we're talking about the

7 people, the patients who are in there daily. These

8 are the same people who we can say -- who are we?

9 We can't point at one group. We can point at the

10 county execs. We can point at the governor and we

11 can say don't close our hospital.

12 We are going into a deeper recession.

13 There is an economic crisis going on right now and

14 we cannot hide it. Once people start losing jobs,

15 where will they be going for health care? Where

16 will people be going when they need the health care

17 they are supposed to get for their own health to

18 stand up, be well and continue?

19 Certainly at the end of the day there

20 will be death. Everyone will start to get

21 incredibly sick and incredibly ill and then we're

22 going to have all these deaths. And whose hands

23 will that rest on? Who will be preoccupied about

24 that? Who will we be able to point to? Obviously

25 no one. Because in this illegal process that has

1 been going on over the last two months, no one is
2 going to be bit back by the laws that are stacked
3 into place. No one is going to be in trouble for
4 any of these illegal closing proceedings --

5 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thirty seconds.

6 VICTOR MONTERROSA: -- that are going
7 on.

8 Finally, this is the end -- this is
9 the end of community services. One of the biggest
10 parts as we talk about the Ironbound is that there
11 is a lot of people, Latino people, as well as
12 Portuguese people, Brazilian people, immigrants.
13 These are the people who need to be represented.
14 People who are least to get any type of help once
15 they have to take transportation to go another
16 place where vouchers aren't going to be helping you
17 with some type of reimbursement. You won't be
18 getting the support you need from the family that
19 lives nearby. You won't be getting support from
20 the community.

21 You have to save Saint James and all
22 the hospitals of Newark starting thee months ago,
23 starting one year ago.

24 (Applause)

25 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Emily Passoa?

1 A VOICE: Who?

2 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Someone signed
3 in all the same people. Somebody signed this whole
4 group in, so I'm just going by -- is this person
5 not here yet either?

6 Okay, I may be pronouncing it wrong,
7 but it's P-A-S-S-O-A is the last name.

8 Maria Coutinlo. This is all the same
9 handwriting that signed everybody in. Do you know
10 this group?

11 A VOICE: She passes.

12 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Okay. Maria
13 Ceraldo. Did anybody sign up? Alice Schreiner.
14 Oh, I'm sorry can you give us your name?

15 ALICE SCHREINER: Yes. Good evening.
16 My name is Alice Schreiner, S-C-H-R-E-I-N-E-R. I'm
17 supervisor of the City of Newark. I work at the
18 Ironbound Senior Citizens Center.

19 I would like to take this opportunity
20 to speak on behalf of the many senior citizens that
21 have come to me from the Ironbound who have been
22 expressing their concerns with the closing of Saint
23 James Hospital.

24 Many of them have told me their needs
25 with all the services that they require from the

1 local hospital. They feel that the loss of these
2 services are a threat to their life.

3 At this time I would like to read a
4 letter from one of the seniors that attend my
5 center. "I am 88 years old, a widow living alone
6 in the same house here in the Ironbound all my
7 life. I had two children born at Saint James
8 Hospital. I had two major operations there. I
9 went to the emergency room often, twice to get
10 stitches from cutting myself. I fell twice, broke
11 my glasses, had stitches. Another time I walked to
12 the hospital at three o'clock in the morning
13 because I was in strong pain from not being able to
14 urinate for ten hours.

15 Always Saint James Hospital. I have
16 had my testing done there at Saint James and now
17 that I'm older it's more often. Mammogram once a
18 year. Bone density, every two years. I've been
19 diagnosed as high risk for osteoporosis.
20 Ultrasound for carotid artery. Ultrasound for
21 thyroid. Ultrasound for my legs. Echocardiogram.
22 I have high blood pressure and I have asthma. I
23 have already been diagnosed with acute asthma and
24 have been on a respirator when I stopped breathing.

25 It is very comforting to know that I

1 have a hospital so close where I can walk to. I'm
2 very disturbed with the recent development,
3 especially with all the testing that I have to have
4 done.

5 Please help the senior citizens who
6 have always depended on Saint James Hospital."

7 (Applause)

8 As a personal note I would like to
9 say I too have been a resident of the Ironbound all
10 of my life, and we invite people to come into the
11 Ironbound, build your home. We have many new homes
12 going up. Come to our restaurants, they are the
13 best. Come to all our entertainment facilities,
14 New Jersey PAC, The Rock. Come on down. But I
15 think we should warn them, you might not go out
16 alive because if you have an emergency, you might
17 be dead before you can get treatment because we
18 have no walk-in hospital.

19 (Applause)

20 REV. MONSTELLA FREIBERG: Monstella
21 Freiberg, F-R-E-I-B-E-R-G. I am a resident of the
22 Ironbound. And too, I am a pastor of the
23 Ironbound. So, I hear what the people are saying,
24 what the people are concerned about.

25 I'm here because I don't agree with

1 the deal. I think this is too much of a sweet
2 deal, as some of you say, for the Cathedral Health
3 East.

4 (Applause)

5 I'm against the closing of Columbus
6 and Saint James. And just there to begin, I think
7 that Saint Michael's is not prepared to absorb the
8 patients from Saint James and Columbus.

9 (Applause)

10 There are not enough beds and there
11 are not people that can understand the culture or
12 the language.

13 Let me talk about Donna Maria. Two
14 weeks ago their daughter took her to the emergency
15 room of Saint James Hospital, and it was said go
16 ahead, go to Saint Michael's because we don't can
17 do the test you need.

18 They went to Saint Michael's. This
19 lady of 82 years old stayed at Saint Michael's for
20 five days. Didn't receive a bed, didn't receive a
21 health to do because the people were saying to her
22 no comprendo, no intendo.

23 (Applause)

24 Of course she speaks Portuguese, and
25 the personnel was not ready to receive Donna Maria.

1 Just five months ago went to the ER
2 of Saint James Hospital and was very happy there.
3 And after the experience at Saint Michael's said,
4 "I don't go anymore. I prefer to die at home."

5 That is the reality we are in. The
6 health crisis here in Newark and in the State and
7 in the country.

8 I hear the solution is for this
9 economic situation, we close two hospitals and we
10 keep one. That is not enough. We have a chance
11 here to come together, Cathedral Health, Catholic
12 Health East, the State, the Department of Health,
13 the city with the mayors, with council people, the
14 state politicians and the community around Columbus
15 and Saint James to come with solutions that are
16 really important for the people and really help
17 them.

18 I urge a fair process with the input
19 of the community. I don't agree that we have the
20 first hearing of Saint Michael's before Saint James
21 and Columbus. This is just not right. And
22 transparency and accountability is what we expect
23 from you. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you.

25 (Applause)

1 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Lev D.

2 Zilbermints and then it will be Rocco Barros.

3 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Is it Lou?

4 LEV D. ZILBERMINTS: Yes, okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Your first name
6 is not Lou?

7 LEV D. ZILBERMINTS: Now, where is
8 the secretary? You are the reporter. This is
9 yours.

10 Good evening everyone. I will be
11 brief. The paper I just gave you identifies me as
12 the chess champion of the entire Essex County since
13 1995.

14 But as for now I'm here to report
15 that I've been a patient at Saint Michael's
16 Hospital a couple of times. And the fact of the
17 matter is if they weren't there for assistance that
18 Saint Michael's Hospital gave me when I was a
19 patient there, who knows how it would have turned
20 out. So, I do have a debt that I owe to Saint
21 Michael's Hospital, and I should say thank you for
22 me.

23 That being said, I do believe that
24 Saint Michael's Hospital needs to be open and needs
25 to have the people that serve it still in their

1 jobs. The same for Saint James, by the way. I
2 mean why is it that we can send troops into Iraq
3 and spend all the money here and there, but we
4 cannot get our hospitals in order? Why is it that
5 the governor is making --(applause)-- is making
6 cuts to education, to hospitals, okay. He's making
7 education cuts, I think it's a 12 percent cut in
8 education. God knows how many other. He's making
9 cuts to the hospital, and they are going to travel
10 next week and protest, and I urge everyone to come
11 into Trenton and to protest.

12 Now that being said, I would like to
13 ask a question of you. You, yes, you can afford
14 quality medical care. The poor people can't. Do
15 you understand that?

16 (Applause)

17 Yeah, I am American. American, well,
18 I'm not (unintelligible) I go to a different
19 hospital, but I have friends at Rutgers. I'm as a
20 Rutgers student from the government center came
21 here to represent some of my friends who weren't
22 able to make it. So, this is what I urge you. Let
23 me put it into perspective, as in political science
24 from Rutgers, you close those hospitals and I
25 guarantee you the next time you have an election

1 for governor (unintelligible) our legislature, they
2 are going to throw you out on your ear. Thank you.

3 (Applause)

4 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Rocco Barros.

5 ROCCO BARROS: Rocco Barros,
6 B-A-R-R-O-S. People should come to the U.S.
7 legally so they can be part of the system rather
8 than a drain on the system, but more importantly so
9 they don't become victims of the system.

10 However, in our present situation it
11 would be totally inhumane to leave them without
12 basic services that America has always thought to
13 offer its residents. You can't have it both ways.
14 These people are not dogs, they are people. The
15 babies need mothers. And they are legal as long
16 as they remain in our country, but apparently you
17 want to solve the problem of the health care crisis
18 in Newark simply by breaking more laws. This
19 charade obviously has been going on for some time
20 and the cascade of excuses given at the press
21 conference by the mayor (inaudible) and Catholic
22 Health East show that the people of that community
23 are getting legally hoodwinked.

24 Assemblyman Coutinho was kind enough
25 to show up for exactly five minutes, just long

1 enough as to pat himself on the back for a job
2 poorly done, and to congratulate your job and the
3 community of hardworking Ironbound residents for
4 the medical services which they absolutely require.

5 If Catholic Health East is not
6 capable of managing a hospital for the Ironbound
7 section of Newark in an equitable fashion, then
8 perhaps they should gather up the cause and go home
9 and leave the job to somebody else who is capable
10 of running the hospital.

11 (Applause)

12 Some of the same type of communities
13 in New Jersey manage full functional hospitals in
14 their poor communities. Why can't we expect that
15 in this part of Newark?

16 Our legal rights are being
17 sidestepped. Meetings that are owed to us and the
18 community have been and are being shoved under the
19 rug.

20 In fact, I've learned recently that
21 although Saint James is slated to close on
22 March 15th, the public will not be until
23 March 14th. Now according to the math, that's
24 exactly one day's notice.

25 A VOICE: What's wrong with this

1 picture?

2 ROCCO BARROS: Send a letter to stop
3 spend \$300 million of New Jersey tax money to give
4 us a nursing home instead of a fully functional
5 hospital.

6 (Applause)

7 We want a fully functional hospital
8 right where Saint James now stands, and it has
9 somehow managed to stand for the last I don't know
10 how many generations, through world wars,
11 recessions and through The Great Depression.

12 In closing --

13 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thirty seconds.

14 ROCCO BARROS: What's that?

15 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thirty seconds.

16 A VOICE: Miss, I would rather give
17 him my three minutes, please.

18 ROCCO BARROS: In closing \$300
19 million is quite a bit of money. I'm sure some of
20 that can be used to ensure the working status of
21 Saint James Hospital.

22 So, please, stop giving us your lame
23 excuses. Stop violating the laws of the State. Do
24 not let Saint James Hospital close, not one single
25 section of it.

1 Please do your jobs. Leave our
2 hospital open.

3 I will be back on March 14th, and I
4 do not plan to be in such a good mood. And I would
5 appreciate you not smirk the next time I see you.

6 (Applause)

7 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Joseph Della
8 Fave and then it will be Leonard Thomas and then
9 Joseph Nardone.

10 JOSEPH DELLA FAVE: Joseph Della
11 Fave, D-E-L-L-A-F-A-V-E. I'm Executive Director of
12 the Ironbound Community Corporation. We provide
13 services for thousands of people daily in the
14 neighborhood.

15 I'm here primarily out of concern for
16 Saint James, as well as the Columbus Hospital
17 situations. So, I'll be brief and to the point as
18 much as I can.

19 I simply want to support many of the
20 statements which have been made earlier rather than
21 going into any of them in detail.

22 Concerning transparency, public
23 accountability and the integrity of the public
24 process.

25 I want to support the concerns which

1 have been raised about a public health care crisis,
2 and I shutter to think about the future of health
3 care in our affected communities with even fewer
4 services in the future especially for poor people
5 in our neighborhood.

6 Thirdly, I urge the State to use its
7 leverage and authority with our public dollars to
8 get the best outcome as possible in this obviously
9 very horrible situation. We're left holding the
10 bag here in the worst situation possible, feeling
11 powerless and feeling behind the eight ball.

12 The State has all the authority and
13 leverage in this position, or as much as anybody
14 else and we urge you to use that to the greatest
15 extent people to deliver to us the best situation
16 possible in the end.

17 Lastly, I just want to restate what
18 so many people here have said already. People are
19 here for Saint James and Columbus Hospital because
20 we cannot wait for the process to catch up with
21 reality. The reality is that the crisis is here
22 currently. The train is well out of the station.
23 The process is well behind all of this.

24 We're here out of concern today.
25 We're going to be here tomorrow. The great hope

1 obviously is for you, the State, to catch up with
2 all of this, and I don't mean to belittle in any
3 way your role in any of this, your attention, your
4 consideration to any of this, but we obviously are
5 feeling powerless. You have so much authority in
6 this situation, and on March 14th and on March 15th
7 we're hoping that you use your power, your
8 authority and our public dollars to deliver back to
9 the community as much as possible.

10 (Applause)

11 So that we can go forward in this
12 health care crisis. Thank you very much.

13 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Leonard Thomas
14 and then it looks like -- I can't pronounce it.

15 A VOICE: I gave up my time.

16 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: He didn't need
17 it. He finished his statement within the three
18 minutes.

19 LEONARD THOMAS: Good evening. My
20 name is Leonard Thomas. I'm a resident of East
21 Ward and I'm here about the closing of Saint James
22 Hospital.

23 Actually, I'm very upset with what's
24 going on right now because even though there has
25 been rumors here and there about closing, there has

1 been no chance for the public to really talk about
2 what's happening. How we loose the hospital is
3 really important to our community.

4 The whole process seems to be
5 something like, well, we're going to have a good
6 trial for Saint James so we can hang them the next
7 day and everything will be taken care of after
8 that.

9 The Ironbound is basically a working
10 community. People have worked there for years.
11 They finished work and retired here, and they have
12 certain health needs, they have reached a good age.
13 And we have young families coming, too, and they
14 are having children. Their children need that
15 health care and all the other people who work there
16 still need health care, too.

17 But it seems that this whole process
18 is just thrown back to the wind. It doesn't seem
19 to be important. Some seem to have been taken
20 aback and say, look, we'll just take this hospital
21 and we'll just throw it away, and these people can
22 just take a car ride or taxi ride and go to another
23 hospital here.

24 Obviously they have not taken the
25 time to come into the community and see what it is

1 to take that ride. Even getting here tonight,
2 coming by bus because somebody is not having a
3 heart attack was difficult because the traffic is
4 heavy. If you put in an event at the arena or one
5 of the other places, if you put in traffic that's
6 usual for the morning coming in or evening going
7 out, it's almost impossible. At times I've walked
8 home faster than I would be able to take a car or a
9 taxi.

10 (Applause)

11 So, I was able to walk. But actually
12 I have a heart condition. If I were having a heart
13 attack, I would be in big trouble. And then you
14 tell me instead of going to Saint James I have to
15 go to U.M.D.N.J. to take the time to go there. The
16 question then is if I even was able to get to
17 University or get to Saint Michael's, would there
18 be room for me, or would I be sitting out in the
19 emergency room waiting for care to come before I
20 stopped breathing?

21 (Applause)

22 I have been -- I have been with
23 people who have gone to the emergency room, who
24 have been there literally for days waiting to get
25 health care. It's not available on a basis that we

1 need. And you're telling us now as a community all
2 of us have to go to University, go to Saint
3 Michael's. It's not going to be enough.

4 The really sad part is in all these
5 discussions I keep hearing money thrown about.
6 It's almost as if someone has decided that the
7 lives of the people in the East Ward are not as
8 valuable as someone somewhere else.

9 (Applause)

10 By saying that now the health care is
11 just over there, you have to take more time to get
12 there. Instead of being ten minutes away, now it's
13 a half-hour, maybe 45 minutes away if the traffic
14 is bad.

15 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thirty seconds.

16 LEONARD THOMAS: If I'm ill, that's
17 not enough time. That's not going to do it.
18 That's not going to make me feel better if I'm
19 having a heart attack or having a hard time
20 breathing.

21 So, I hope you will be able to look
22 at that. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you.

24 A VOICE: Who?

25 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: You said it was

1 your name, didn't you?

2 A VOICE: Yes, it is.

3 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: That's you.

4 ELIZABETH FARAH: My name is

5 Elizabeth Farah, F-A-R-A-H. Everything everybody

6 has said here tonight is everything I would have

7 mentioned, but I hope you were hearing everybody's

8 voices because remember September the 11th,

9 remember all the emergencies, the transportation.

10 It's difficult for people to go back and forth

11 because it's going to be on your conscience and

12 it's going to hurt you in the way if anything

13 happens that you find that you cannot help people.

14 Just think if one of the people in any of these

15 neighborhoods were your parents, sister, brother

16 cousin, nephew.

17 A VOICE: That's right.

18 (Applause)

19 ELIZABETH FARAH: If one of them

20 dies, its going to be on your conscience. Remember

21 that. Thank you.

22 (Applause)

23 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Joseph Nardone

24 and then it will be Mario Gonzalez.

25 JOSEPH NARDONE: My name is Joseph

1 Nardone, that's N-A-R-D-O-N-E. I'm here against
2 many of the hospital closings that are taking
3 place, Columbus and Saint James. And I'm for
4 Cathedral East taking over Saint Michael's to
5 provide some health facilities in the City of
6 Newark and in our area.

7 I went to the Newark Public Library
8 and I looked over the application that you talk
9 about. It's on display. And I laughed at it
10 because you have to be a professional, health care
11 professional, an accountant, possibly a lawyer to
12 understand a stack of documents that high
13 (indicating).

14 (Applause)

15 And I went over and sat there for at
16 least an hour and went over it, and it was very
17 little that was said that I really understand.
18 But, as has been said before, I did make some
19 copies. And back in January, 15th, 2008, Mr. John
20 Calabria from Cathedral Health wrote to the
21 Director, the Office of Certificate of Need, Health
22 Care Facility, New Jersey Department of Health
23 about five --

24 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Step back just a
25 little.

1 JOSEPH NARDONE: About filing the
2 Certificate of Need for the closing. One of the
3 paragraphs that I laugh at is that the person who
4 wrote this of the Cathedral Health System,
5 Cathedral Health System, he said the cessation of
6 acute care services at Columbus Hospital and Saint
7 James Hospital will not have a significant impact
8 on residents' access to health care.

9 As detailed in the CN application,
10 these small community hospitals operate in one of
11 New Jersey's most over-bedded counties. The
12 overriding service areas are already served by many
13 nearby hospitals, each with under utilized bed
14 capacity and numerous clinics and federally
15 qualified health centers are also nearby providing
16 a range of health care services.

17 I read this paragraph and I'm amazed
18 as I listen to the many professionals from
19 Columbus, from Saint James, from Saint Michael's
20 talking about how people have to wait to get
21 services in the hospital. How they have to send
22 people with emergency care to other hospitals and
23 do not understand how this gentleman from Cathedral
24 Health makes that statement.

25 There is also in the Ironbound the

1 fact that --

2 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thirty seconds.

3 JOSEPH NARDONE: The fact that they

4 are having clubs from the City of Newark, from

5 Newark Airport, from the airlines, these people

6 will have health care that can pay a hospital like

7 Saint James if they need it, and they are also

8 building houses and condos that are going for

9 people that have more money than the average

10 working class person. They can pay for their

11 health care.

12 Has any service, has a census been

13 taken of the people and the number of people in the

14 Ironbound that will use a small hospital and maybe

15 even a bigger hospital that might be able to be

16 used there and be an attraction to people who have

17 health care to supplement the working class people

18 who may not be able to have health care?

19 (Applause)

20 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you.

21 Mario Gonzalez. No. Eugene DeBellis?

22 A VOICE: He just went out.

23 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: He went out. Is

24 he coming back?

25 A VOICE: Yes.

1 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Okay. Dina
2 Matos.

3 DINA MATOS McGREEVEY: Hello. My
4 name is Dina Matos, M-A-T-O-S, McGreevey,
5 M-C-G-R-E-E-V-E-Y. I'm the Executive Director of
6 the Columbus Foundation.

7 First of all, I want to thank
8 everyone from Columbus who is here, but especially
9 the doctors because they are on staff at other
10 hospitals, they can go anywhere, but they are here
11 because they care about their patients.

12 And now I have a few questions.
13 First of all, why was the needs assessment not done
14 before the decision to close hospitals was made?
15 How can individuals who know nothing about our
16 community or its medical needs make decisions about
17 their lives?

18 The State of New Jersey is putting
19 the lives of thousands of people at risk by closing
20 these hospitals. I want to know what will happen,
21 what is the State's plan for caring for victims of
22 a terrorist attack or pandemic? I hope it doesn't
23 include the use of urban hospitals because they
24 will die.

25 (Applause)

1 Where are our elected officials? Why

2 are they not here?

3 (Applause)

4 Why have they not visited Columbus

5 Hospital or Saint James Hospital? When was the

6 last time they spent some time in the emergency

7 room in this city?

8 (Applause)

9 Let them come and visit these

10 hospitals and then they can make an important

11 decision about the health care needs of our

12 community; not before that.

13 Our residents are being discriminated

14 against because they cannot speak for themselves.

15 They cannot defend themselves. This would not

16 happen in Livingston. This would not happen in

17 Short Hills. This would not happen in North

18 Jersey. This would not happen in Rumson.

19 It would happen in the City of Newark

20 because these people cannot defend themselves.

21 CHE's answer to our pregnant women and to children,

22 if you need medical care, get in a cab and good

23 luck. I hope you survive the ride.

24 (Applause)

25 As for other hospitals in the area,

1 well, the State's answer is we don't need -- you
2 don't need Columbus Hospital, you don't need Saint
3 James. In Columbus's case, why don't you go down
4 the road to Clara Maass.

5 Let me tell you about the situation
6 at Clara Maass. A week and a half ago they were on
7 divert practically every day, and you know what
8 divert means. They had 42 patients waiting for
9 beds. They were lined up along the hallways of the
10 hospital. That is an injustice.

11 (Applause)

12 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thirty seconds.

13 DINA MATOS McGREEVEY: Criminals have
14 the right to a trial. Why don't our patients have
15 the right to be heard? Our patients deserve the
16 same quality care that our governor and our elected
17 officials do.

18 And if this CN process is so
19 transparent, why was the notice for this meeting
20 placed in an obscure section of the newspaper?

21 (Applause)

22 On behalf of the medical staff of
23 Columbus Hospital, I want to invite the governor,
24 the mayor and all of our elected officials, the
25 officials at the Department of Health to come and

1 visit these hospitals. Spend some time in our
2 emergency rooms, spend some time in our intensive
3 care unit, and then make a decision about health
4 care.

5 (Applause)

6 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Did Isabel Costa
7 come back?

8 EUGENE DEBELLIS: My name is Eugene
9 DeBellis, D-E-B-E-L-L-I-S. I'm an educator and a
10 businessman and I've lived most of my life in the
11 North Ward section of Newark.

12 Now, there is three things that you
13 have to have to be made a community. One is the
14 school system, second is the church, and third is
15 the hospitals.

16 Now, in my experience, all of these
17 three things have been met up to this point in the
18 North Ward section of Newark. But, however, some
19 of the things that I've been hearing from my
20 standpoint has shown that there is a lot of
21 injustice.

22 One, as has been stated just minutes
23 ago, about these public hearings. I wouldn't have
24 heard this public hearing notice unless I was
25 called by someone from the hospital to indicate to

1 me that there was going to be a hearing tonight. I
2 checked with the schools in the area; the schools
3 in the area have no knowledge of these public
4 hearings. I also checked with the council and the
5 councilmen in Newark and they have no knowledge of
6 it. The public officials had no knowledge of it.
7 Why is it? I don't know. Is it because they are
8 trying to keep this obscure from the people? I
9 don't know.

10 (Applause)

11 Now, personally by listening and
12 technically listening to all the people that are
13 here and had an opportunity to speak on the phone,
14 I think that there is a lot of issues here and
15 there is very valid issues.

16 Now, where I stand from my standpoint
17 in the business that I have, I operate a performing
18 arts center and I had my secretary tell me that her
19 sister needed emergency care. She went to Clara
20 Maass Hospital and she waited six hours, six hours
21 in order to be serviced.

22 Now, that's just one case. Just
23 multiply it by the many that are going to be in the
24 emergency divisions of the hospital.

25 Now, if you take a beautiful hospital

1 like Columbus Hospital and you close that hospital
2 with the beds that it serves and with the 15
3 departments that serve the community, and the eight
4 to 900 nurses that are on the staff, if you close
5 that hospital you're going to have an economic
6 situation because you have a lot of these people
7 who are aged who are reaching their retirement age
8 and they won't have an opportunity to get a job
9 anywhere else.

10 And not only that, but for the health
11 care in the community I can see that's going to
12 create chaos, absolute chaos. I don't know how
13 they are going to -- only God would know,
14 performing a miracle to actually be able to
15 accommodate what Saint James accommodates, what
16 Columbus accommodates.

17 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you.

18 EUGENE DEBELLIS: It's impossible.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Richard Pizzano,
22 you gave up your time earlier for someone. Do you
23 want to speak now?

24 RICHARD PIZZANO: Richard Pizzano,
25 P-I-Z-Z-A-N-O, attending physician, Columbus

1 Hospital for 32 years. For 32 years patients have
2 been coming to my office. They live not only in
3 Newark and in the surrounding suburbs, but Columbus
4 Hospital has an affected area including Bellville,
5 East Orange, Nutley, Paramus, all the suburbs
6 around us, and many people depend on our services.

7 I left the hospital today, I left the
8 hospital with a full emergency room with ICU and
9 CCU both full, with an occupancy of almost
10 100 percent and with the nurses leaving. We are
11 hemorrhaging and dying slowly and I have to think
12 in a few more weeks we'll have a full hospital and
13 no staff.

14 So, it's like having a restaurant
15 with all the tables occupied and people standing on
16 the side, but the hospital -- the restaurant, will
17 be closed.

18 (Applause)

19 So, please think twice before closing
20 our vital, essential hospital giving services to a
21 community and for patients who are begging for our
22 services. Please, we plead of you. Thank you.

23 (Applause)

24 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: All right.

25 Arnold Cohen and then Janice Santos and it looks

1 like Christian Hilo or Christine.

2 ARNOLD COHEN: My name is Arnold
3 Cohen and I live in and am a lifelong resident of
4 Newark. The Ironbound needs Saint James Hospital.
5 The area serves as the economic life blood of the
6 region. The area is next to the airport, the port,
7 garbage incinerator. There are many factories
8 using toxic substances, and roads carrying them.
9 One catastrophe is all you need. Minutes matter in
10 cases like this. Route 21 can be a gridlock.

11 We urge the department to take
12 immediate action to compel Cathedral to stop the
13 closure of Saint James Hospital and not commence
14 the closure of Columbus Hospital until a coherent
15 transition plan is developed with all providers and
16 all health care institutions in Newark and a full
17 understanding of the residents' health needs,
18 culture and language needs and transportation needs
19 are well understood.

20 We demand that the State conduct
21 community assessment now, and that must occur prior
22 to the closure of Saint James and Columbus Hospital
23 and agreeing to put \$130 million into renovating
24 Saint Michael's and approximately \$120 million to
25 assume liabilities and debts of all three

1 hospitals. You have not done your work. The
2 community has not had an opportunity to speak.

3 As was stated before, 700 people came
4 out when Saint James was threatened. Those people
5 are not here today because people didn't know about
6 this. We have a hospital that's already, for all
7 intents and purposes, closed without the community
8 having a voice.

9 We urge you to undue those actions.
10 Thank you.

11 (Applause)

12 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Janice Santos
13 and then it will Christine Hilo.

14 JANICE SANTOS: My name is Janice
15 Santos, S-A-N-T-O-S. I'm 14 years old and I'm here
16 to speak for my mom and people who can't speak.

17 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Hold on just a
18 minute. There are people leaving and we want to be
19 able to hear you.

20 Okay. I'll re-start your time. The
21 bus is leaving, that's why.

22 Can you clear the aisles?

23 Okay. Speak up a little louder.

24 JANICE SANTOS: My name is Janice
25 Santos, S-A-N-T-O-S. I'm 14 years old. I'm here

1 to speak for my mom and people who can't speak

2 English or they are scared to speak.

3 I just had surgery at Saint James

4 just three weeks ago. I was very pleased with

5 Saint James. It breaks my heart to see Saint James

6 go away. They are there for pregnant women.

7 People who have no money to pay for it. You're

8 dealing with those who are uninsured and poor

9 people.

10 How about if there is an emergency

11 that the life of the person is in danger? Traffic

12 is another problem.

13 Keep Saint James open. This is our

14 community.

15 (Applause)

16 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you.

17 Christina Hilo and then it's Humberto Yopez, I

18 think, physician.

19 CHRISTIAN HILO: Good evening. My

20 name is Christina Hilo, last name, H-I-L-O. As you

21 have just seen, there are about 30 members of our

22 community that came out. They just left because we

23 have to take a bus to come here. We didn't have

24 any other access of transportation, considering

25 that we transport the senior citizens.

1 Let me start with this. I went to
2 the hospital today to see one of my friends and I
3 seen her and she's crying. She's crying with all
4 the tears coming down her face and I'm like, "Why
5 are you crying, honey?"

6 And she said, "I lost my job. I
7 worked here 19 years. I lost my job. I can't get
8 another one."

9 Okay. We're dealing with the fact
10 that also you're losing jobs and also losing
11 services to the community.

12 Another thing, this whole thing like,
13 oh, we don't have money. University didn't have
14 money either, \$32 million lost are in debt. What
15 do you want to do? Do you want to call --

16 (Applause)

17 The fact is you are normalizing this
18 idea of closing hospitals. The fact that political
19 officials just said we're going to close this
20 hospital. Why, because it's normal. Let it just
21 be normal, right. You want to rationalize it, you
22 want to normalize it? Is this what kind of service
23 you want to do for the citizens of New Jersey?

24 (Applause)

25 One of the other things that I just

1 wanted to bring up was I know that this has to do
2 with the certificate of leniency levels at Saint
3 Michael's. In the letter at the beginning by
4 Terrence French from Cathedral compares Cathedral
5 Hospital to largely financially stable hospitals
6 with comparative hospitals, Robert Wood Johnson,
7 University Hospital, Community Medical Center. Of
8 course these hospitals would stay open. Why?
9 Because they are financially stable and they are in
10 an area of affluent background, okay.

11 (Applause)

12 These are hospitals of affluent
13 background. Where are we? In Newark where there
14 is working class people. There is poor people.
15 There is uninsured people. Ironbound, you ever go
16 there? It's primarily immigrant. You go there
17 it's Brazilian, Portuguese, also Latino, newly
18 immigrants from Ecuador. You expect them to be
19 able to speak out right now in front of you? They
20 are afraid. Several of these people we were trying
21 to get them to speak. No, no, no, no, no, no.
22 Why, because they speak a different language and
23 they are scared of that.

24 A VOICE: That's right.

25 CHRISTIAN HILA: How do you expect

1 them to go to a hospital where there is no
2 translator there? They are just going to add
3 translators to those hospitals. Saint James is
4 different. Columbus is different. These hospitals
5 are community hospitals. These are community
6 hospitals. How long has Saint James been there?

7 A VOICE: 100 years.

8 CHRISTIAN HILO: 100 years. My time
9 is up I know, but you know March 14th that's one
10 day before the closing. What are you going to do
11 about it? Are you going to stop the closing or
12 everything is gone? What are you going to do?

13 (Applause)

14 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: And then Paris
15 Struthers and Ellyne Culver.

16 HUMBERTO YEPEZ: I'm Dr. Humberto
17 Yopez, Y-E-P-E-Z. I have been practicing surgery
18 in the Ironbound, Saint James Hospital and Columbus
19 Hospital for about 32 years. And all these years I
20 have been very happy to help all the Spanish
21 people, Portuguese people and American people, with
22 or without insurance.

23 So, I can see the desperation that
24 they face. And through all the comments that we
25 hear I can see that our unhappiness and sentiment

1 are increasing, but Saint James' closure is
2 eminent. Actually we don't know who is going to
3 come to our rescue. We are in trouble, our future
4 health care is in focus and I don't know who is
5 going to take care of that.

6 And one thing that is very relevant
7 to me is in the last two, three years our property
8 taxes have been increased two to three times more.
9 Okay, this we cannot say the taxes are working for
10 you.

11 Please keep Saint James, Columbus
12 open. We need them.

13 (Applause)

14 I don't believe that the State
15 supports the hospitals as well as they support the
16 new Prudential Arena.

17 (Applause)

18 The arena property is just for the
19 attraction and entertainment of all those few
20 thousand and most of them are outsiders. They come
21 from New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut,
22 everywhere.

23 (Applause)

24 The State has to provide security,
25 repairing of the street and so forth. On the other

1 hand, the State cannot support two health
2 institutions that are serving the Ironbound and
3 250,000 human beings that are not going for
4 destruction, they just going for help to see if
5 they can get support and get the medical care and
6 go places.

7 So, that's the only thing I want to
8 say. We have hearing, so many comments and
9 repetition and now it's up to you to influence the
10 State level to keep this institution going.

11 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you.

12 (Applause)

13 PARIS STROTHER: My name is Paris
14 P-A-R-I-S, Strother, S-T-R-O-T-H-E-R. Basically,
15 to be brief, I feel I don't have much to say. I
16 speak to the panel here that Newark really needs
17 all of its hospitals open, all of its health care.
18 There is the Children's Hospital that was first
19 closed down under the administration and want the
20 hospital closing down it buses around, it's just
21 like quote, unquote a normal thing. And Children's
22 Hospital, because they feel that's best special
23 care, and, you know, I figure that you know the
24 Governor spent 300 billion or million for the Iraqi
25 War which could help to re-start this hospital and

1 get these hospitals back open and also clinics and
2 everything else because our community is real
3 small. They need the hospital. It's very, very
4 important. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you.

6 (Applause)

7 ELLYNE CULVER: Good evening one and
8 all, concerned citizens, distinguished panel. I'm
9 Ellyne Culver, Co-Chair of the Newark branch of
10 Peoples Organization For Progress. Larry Ham is
11 the chairman.

12 Tonight I come, listening as a former
13 ESL instructor in the Neck, I certainly take --
14 would implore you that when you go back and you're
15 sitting at your desk and you've got to check yeah
16 or nay, we would implore you make it Saint James
17 has to stay. Now why? Everything now is the
18 bottom line. So, I thought that, you know, we have
19 to -- the war, we have to stop the war abroad and
20 at home. The war abroad seems to be taking our
21 monies, and so, therefore, Governor Corzine and his
22 cabinet are put into a position where they have to
23 cut costs. Ouch. You know, when you have to go to
24 the hospital, that's a critical thing.

25 But, what I'm here to say, here in

1 Newark in the Ironbound, please consider when
2 you're making that decision, wow, we've got the
3 airport, pollution, what are we dealing with, the
4 known and unknown. We have poor air quality in
5 general. You know, one of the former
6 vice-presidents just got an academy award. We have
7 the people, themselves, a lot of senior citizens
8 that are very valuable in the community, okay,
9 because this is how we all around Newark and Essex
10 County, please stop closing our hospitals.

11 Now, remember, remember. If you
12 can't think of all the main stories, you're talking
13 about the neck's, N-E-C-K apostrophe S, human
14 capital. There is a reason not to close it, human
15 capital. The little babies being born, okay.

16 So, we've got a bottom line too. You
17 heard all the stories of touching the heart, but
18 there is a bottom line here, too. We ask you,
19 please don't close Saint James. Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 A VOICE: Monica is here.

22 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Okay. Tell me
23 your name, the last name.

24 MONICA COELHO: Good evening. My
25 name is Monica Coelho.

1 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Okay.

2 MONICA COELHO: Sorry, I'm just
3 coming from work.

4 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: That's okay.
5 Spell your name again.

6 MONICA COELHO: Monica Coelho,
7 C-O-E-L-H-O.

8 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Okay, got it.

9 MONICA COELHO: Am I on speaker?

10 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Probably.
11 You're the last speaker.

12 What you need to do is give us your
13 name and spell your last name. I'll turn the timer
14 on then and it will be three minutes. Do you need
15 to catch your breath?

16 MONICA COELHO: No, I'll start.

17 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Are you sure?

18 MONICA COELHO: Yes. My name is
19 Monica Coelho, C-O-E-L-H-O. I'm a nurse and I'm
20 not working at Saint James presently.

21 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Step back a
22 little.

23 MONICA COELHO: I did work at Saint
24 James for 17 years, I did work for the State, for
25 the CEC, for the Department of Health and I've

1 worked with OEH. I've been a HAZMAT responder for
2 the State. I've been a small pox responder for the
3 State.

4 I'm representing the, not only the
5 community of Ironbound, but all of Newark and the
6 people as we see the impact of what it means to
7 close this hospital. I do understand at the moment
8 that there is an agreement that will keep the
9 emergency room open, thank God. But there is still
10 issues with that.

11 We're looking at a population of
12 Newark last I knew was in 2004, 250,000 residents
13 not including non-documented residents. The middle
14 of the day we can go to as far as four to five
15 million people coming into the businesses with Penn
16 Station, the airport. We have multiple chemical
17 companies in the area, not just in Newark, we're
18 talking about across the river in South Kearny, in
19 Harrison. We are dealing with the closures that
20 Irvington and Union, patients from there. We're
21 looking at huge volumes in all the remaining
22 hospitals. I've worked at all of them. I've done
23 clinicals. I've studied at the University.

24 We have been completely overwhelmed.
25 We have 50 official -- 52 official long beds, ten

1 pediatric beds. The 52 beds you end up not just
2 one or two, three deep along the hallways.
3 Pediatric beds, people are sitting here, the
4 parents of the kids on their laps because there are
5 not enough rooms. University we doubled up
6 stretchers. It was used for a one stretcher
7 cubicle, we put two and put a curtain. One hundred
8 patients sitting outside. Patients from all over
9 the State, not just trauma. We get everything.
10 Saint Michael's, you've got 50 really
11 official beds. Rumor is you're adding more beds.
12 How many more when you're cutting so many? And all
13 these hospitals the impact has stretched already
14 beyond the city.

15 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thirty seconds.

16 MONICA COELHO: Elizabeth, St.
17 Barnabas. I work at St. Barnabas right now. We
18 have 46 patients waiting for rooms upstairs. We
19 have 50 some patients waiting to come in. We are
20 full beyond capacity. And, in fact, there is more
21 than enough beds in the State in the -- I don't see
22 the numbers there.

23 NJ PAC, The Rock. The amounts are
24 going to be there. Harrison, a huge conference
25 being built, (inaudible). Fourteen huge glass

1 buildings, residential buildings. Where are these
2 people going to be treated? We're already having
3 trouble transferring those patients. Think about
4 it. How would you, if it's your family having been
5 told you're waiting for a bed. You get a bed,
6 you're being admitted, you're seeing the ER and
7 sometimes they are out of time. And this is
8 becoming more and more a fact.

9 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Thank you.

10 (Applause)

11 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: Is there anyone
12 in the room who signed up whose name I didn't call
13 or you weren't here, didn't hear it?

14 All right. Thank you very much. The
15 transcript of this hearing will go to all the board
16 members. You've raised some very good issues that
17 I'm sure will be addressed at the hearing next
18 Thursday to look at the, or to consider the
19 application from Saint Michael's. And we will, in
20 fact, use the information that has been raised
21 here. All the other board members will also
22 receive copies of the transcript.

23 A VOICE: Where is that meeting?

24 CHAIRPERSON DONLEN: I thank you all
25 very much for coming out.

1 Okay. The meeting is adjourned.

2 (Whereupon, the public hearing is

3 adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, SHARI K. GRIMSGAARD, a Certified Court
Reporter and Notary Public of the State of New
Jersey, certify that the foregoing is a true and
accurate computerized transcript of the proceedings
taken before me.

SHARI K. GRIMSGAARD
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER

Dated: March 2, 2008
My Commission Expires on:
July 22, 2008
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