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## **SUNY Vote to Close LICH Ruled Unlawful** *Long Island College Hospital is Open for Care*

BROOKLYN, NY— **In a huge victory for Brooklyn patients and caregivers**, New York Supreme Court judge Johnny L. Baynes today issued a ruling vacating SUNY's vote to close Long Island College Hospital (LICH), finding that SUNY violated the New York State Open Meetings law. Judge Baynes permanently enjoined SUNY from taking any action to close the hospital until they abide by the Open Meetings Law and all other applicable statutory provisions.

The ruling comes after another judge – Justice Betsy Barros – issued a temporary restraining order barring SUNY from closing the hospital or communicating with the Department of Health about its closure plan for LICH.

“This ruling validates what nurses have been saying all along: SUNY acted unlawfully and irresponsibly when they voted to close our community hospital,” said Jill Furillo, RN, Executive Director of the New York State Nurses Association. “We’re going to keep working together to build a powerful coalition to protect Brooklyn patients and keep LICH open for care.”

Even if SUNY comes into full compliance with the Open Meetings Law and other applicable law and properly votes to close the hospital, LICH cannot close without approval by the Department of Health.

“LICH is open for care, and patients, neighbors and staff vow to do whatever it takes to keep this vital hospital open, including continued community actions, lobbying lawmakers and exploring further legal strategies,” said George Gresham, President of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. “We cannot allow the destruction of healthcare access and good jobs in Brooklyn.”

Advocates are calling on state lawmakers to start listening to New York patients, caregivers, and community members. The State should tap into LICH's full potential as a primary care facility and invest in strengthening it, rather than closing it and selling off the real estate.

Dr. Toomas Sorra, a representative of Concerned Physicians for LICH said, “We are very pleased with Judge Baynes' ruling. Patients, doctors, nurses, hospital staff, community organizations and elected representatives are unified in our efforts to keep LICH open as a full-service hospital well in to the future, as it has been for more than 150 years. The care at LICH—as documented in the US News & World Report national hospital survey—is of the highest quality. Closing LICH would deprive Brooklyn of a critical health care resource and leave multiple Brooklyn neighborhoods without

appropriate access to an emergency room and other necessary health care services. We are particularly concerned about the effects of closure on the low-income communities we serve.”

At a hearing last Friday, Judge Baynes heard argument and extended the Temporary Restraining Order pending his decision. Before the hearing, caregivers and patients rallied in the snow and held a press conference with lawmakers, including City Council Members Steven Levin, Letitia James, and Brad Lander, and State Senator Daniel Squadron and Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz. The press conference was emceed by a representative of New York Communities for Change, and supporters from the National Action Network also participated.

LICH is vital to the community and closing the hospital would put patients from across Brooklyn at risk. For 150 years patients have depended on LICH for emergency and primary care services. Without LICH, Brooklyn’s severely over-crowded emergency rooms would be stretched beyond capacity, wait times would increase, and patient outcomes would get worse.

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***1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East** is the largest and fastest-growing healthcare union in America. We represent over 350,000 nurses and caregivers throughout Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Florida. Our mission is to achieve quality care and quality jobs for all.*

*The **New York State Nurses Association** is the voice for hundreds of thousands of frontline nurses. We are New York's largest union and professional association for registered nurses.*