



CITY OF NEW YORK  
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**LOWELL D. KERN**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

July 9, 2021

Evan L. Flatow, MD  
President  
Mount Sinai West Hospital  
1000 Tenth Avenue  
New York, NY 10019

Brad Korn  
Director, Community Affairs  
Mt Sinai Health System  
555 West 57th St 5th Floor  
New York NY 10019

**Re: Mount Sinai West Closure of Medical Detox Unit 9G**

Dear Dr. Flatow & Mr. Korn:

On June 17th, 2021, Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Housing, Health and Human Services Committee heard a presentation by two representatives of the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA), Jeremy Markman and Anne Naguit, who is the lead NYSNA rep for the Mount Sinai Health System, and Vontell Dozier, a Nurse at Mount Sinai West.

The presenters raised concerns about the closure of the Behavioral Health Unit's Medical Detox Unit 9G with 34 beds at Mount Sinai West, formerly known as the Roosevelt Division of St. Luke's Roosevelt.

Due to a change in the full board meeting schedule, on June 28th, 2021, the Executive Committee of MCB4 voted 14 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote to support the following:

- The expeditious re-opening at Mt. Sinai West of its Medical Detox Unit 9G and its staffing to its previous capacity of 34 beds.
- An invitation to representatives from Mount Sinai West to speak to the HHHS Committee on July 15th, 2021, to help us understand how the detox and rehabilitation needs of our community are being met.

*Background*

According to the presenters, the Mount Sinai Psychiatric unit has 74 beds in total. During March of 2020, the Medical Detox Unit 9G with 34 beds had to decrease capacity by about half due to social distancing state regulations. In December of 2020, the entire 9G

Unit was closed for Medical Detox in anticipation of needing the additional beds for Covid-19 patients, and the 9G nursing staff was redeployed throughout the hospital.

Since this has transpired, slightly less than half of the twenty nurses who worked in the Medical Detox Unit 9G have left the Mount Sinai system. Also, the rates of Covid-19 positive cases have decreased substantially, and vaccinations have been widely distributed, yet the unit remains closed. The presenters explained they have engaged Mount Sinai West numerous times and have been told that the Medical Detox Unit 9G will reopen but were provided no metrics that are being examined to determine when to reopen. There is concern the unit will remain closed and will not be able to serve patients who need detox and on-site rehabilitation.

### *Concerns*

It is widely known that due to the pandemic, there has been an increase in mental health concerns and substance use. The pandemic, and several consequences related to it, were also likely to present certain challenges for people in recovery who often have comorbidities and struggle with mental health issues. However, within NYC and statewide, there has been a decrease in the number of beds in behavioral health units as has occurred at Mount Sinai West.

In the past year and prior to the pandemic, mental health issues were a concern in Manhattan Community District 4 (MCD4). We completed a Community Needs Assessment in 2020, and found that in MCD4, psychiatric hospitalizations and suicide rates were higher than the City-wide average. Noted in the assessment is that the United Health Foundation identifies “mental health disorders and substance use disorders” as the “most significant risk factors for suicidal behaviors.”

During the pandemic and more recently, mental health issues in the district and throughout NYC have become more of a concern given the number of unprovoked attacks. This includes an incident of a physical assault on 59th Street and 9th Avenue of a longtime community resident by a man who appeared to be homeless and stated that he “told the hospital” what he was going to do. It is not clear if he was using drugs or if he was mentally ill. The community resident who was attacked lives on 59th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues and was told by the first responders that she needs to be careful, as she lives next to the hospital. The fact that first responders think that the area around the hospital is not safe for residents suggests a lack of care for community residents, both permanent and temporary.

### *Questions*

At its next meeting on July 15th, 2021, the HHHS Committee would like to receive answers to the following questions from Mount Sinai West:

1. When will Mount Sinai West’s Medical Detox Unit 9G be reopened?
2. Will it remain as a 34-bed unit? Will this meet the needs of the community?
3. Will there be both detox and rehab components?
4. If there will be a bed reduction, will there be an increase in preventive care, outpatient services, and/or addiction services in the community?
5. What is the reason for the prolonged delay in reopening given the low COVID infection rates in NYC?

*Conclusion*

MCB4 appreciates NYSNA and its representatives for presenting to the HHHS Committee. We share their concern that the Medical Detox Unit 9G remains closed despite low rates of Covid-19 for several weeks, demonstrated by the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions in New York State.

This is a critically important issue to the HHHS committee. MCB4 and Mount Sinai have worked collaboratively previously and MCB4 looks forward to hearing from Mount Sinai West about the plan moving forward at our next committee meeting on July 15th, 2021.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern  
Chair  
Manhattan  
Community Board 4



Maria Ortiz  
Co-Chair  
Housing, Health  
Human Services Committee



Joe Restuccia,  
Co-Chair  
Housing, Health  
Human Services Committee

cc: Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council  
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate  
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly  
Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, New York State Assembly  
Jeremy Markman, Director of Strategic Campaigns and  
Special Projects, New York Nurses Association  
Anne Naguit, Lead Program Representative, New York Nurses Association