

# HELL'S KITCHEN NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION

## **BLOCK ASSOCIATIONS:**

29 STREET NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
WEST 36TH STREET BLOCK ASSOCIATION  
WEST 43RD STREET BLOCK ASSOCIATION  
WEST 44TH STREET BETTER BLOCK ASSOCIATION  
HK4546BA  
WEST 47TH /48TH STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION  
HK 49-54TH BLOCK ALLIANCE  
WEST 55TH STREET BLOCK ASSOCIATION

## **ORGANIZATIONS:**

CLINTON HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COMPANY  
GARMENT DISTRICT ALLIANCE  
HARTLEY HOUSE  
HUDSON YARDS HELL'S KITCHEN ALLIANCE  
MANHATTAN PLAZA TENANT ASSOCIATION  
PARC VENDOME COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

## **CO-OPS & CONDO ASSOCIATIONS:**

455-7-9 WEST 35TH STREET HDFC  
DYLAN HOUSE COOPERATIVE, W 36TH ST.  
315 WEST 36TH STREET CONDO ASSOCIATION  
348 WEST 36TH STREET CO-OP  
360 OWNERS CORP CO-OP  
CROSS ROADS OWNERS CO-OP, W 36TH ST.

## **BUSINESSES:**

ELLIS BARBERSHOP INC, W 36TH ST  
EJMB REALTY CO INC  
ESPOSITO MEAT MARKET, 9TH AVE.  
FALCON PROPERTIES INC.  
GOTHAM HALL  
HOUNDSTOOTH PUB, 8TH AVE.  
INTERNATIONAL GROCERY, 9TH AVE.  
HY-36 CROWNE PLAZA, W 36TH ST.  
LH CHARNEY ASSOCIATES  
LUCO INTERNATIONAL INC, W 39TH ST.  
MISS BLISS NAIL & SPA, W 36TH ST.  
SEA BREEZE FISH MARKET, 9TH AVE.  
STILE'S FARMERS MARKET, 9TH AVE.  
STITCH BAR & LOUNGE, W 37TH ST.  
TAVOLA, 9TH AVE.  
VITO'S SLICES & ICES, 9TH AVE.

June 30, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of the State of New York  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

The Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Coalition (HKNC) is a group of local block associations, organizations, co-ops and condo associations, businesses, and residents, formed in the wake of COVID-19 in 2020 to address significant public safety and quality-of-life issues facing our community.

HKNC asks the Governor's Office, the NY State Health Commissioner or the NY State Medicaid Director to request a waiver from the federal government under a provision known as the exclusion for Institutions for Mental Disease or "IMD Exclusion".

Public safety on neighborhood streets has been severely impacted by an over-concentration of substance abuse and social service providers. Our members must navigate daily contact with individuals experiencing mental and emotional disorders or with drug dependencies, while many with untreated mental health issues pose a health and safety risk to themselves and to others.

The mentally ill are simply not receiving adequate social services. Instead, they are congregating on public streets where they are targeted by drug dealers. HKNC supports the development of supportive housing, however, supportive housing is not suitable for all individuals in need. Some of the untreated mentally ill simply need more highly supervised housing. There is a strong need for in-patient psychiatric facilities that cannot be achieved through building supportive housing alone.

### *Mental Health Facilities and Medicaid Reimbursement*

Currently, states are prohibited from using Medicaid funds to reimburse stays in mental health facilities with more than 16 patient beds without a waiver from the federal government, a provision known as the exclusion for Institutions for Mental Disease or "IMD Exclusion." Because Medicaid currently excludes payments to IMDs, meaning a hospital, nursing facility, or other

larger institution of more than 16 beds, hundreds of psychiatric beds have been repurposed for other uses.

Therefore, HKNC asks the Governor's Office, the NY State Health Commissioner or the NY State Medicaid Director to request an exemption to the IMD Exclusion. New York can apply for a 1115 waiver (42 USC § 1315) to expand eligibility and reimbursements for IMDs. As of February 1, 2022, eight states and DC have been approved for these waivers: DC, Idaho, Indiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, Vermont, Utah, and Washington. Six states have waivers pending: Alabama, Massachusetts, Montana, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

HKNC's locally-elected Senator Brad Hoylman introduced a bill ([S.8422](#)) to direct New York State to apply for the Medicaid waiver, but the bill did not receive a hearing in the Assembly this legislative session. As the bill is now unlikely to advance further until 2023 at the earliest, HKNC asks for New York State to apply for the Healthy Adult Opportunity Section 1115 Demonstration Application as soon as possible.

Our neighborhoods need every tool possible to solve New York State's mental health crisis, and it is critical that Medicaid funding be leveraged to increase the number of in-patient mental health care options, especially for those on the streets suffering from debilitating mental illness. HKNC looks forward to hearing back from the Governor's Office on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Mario G. Messina  
President, 29 Street Neighborhood Association

Brian Weber  
Co-Chair, West 36<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association

Cressida Connolly  
Co-Chair, West 36<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association

Travis Rodgers  
West 42<sup>nd</sup> St

Ryan Marcano,  
West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Block Association

Susan Ameal,  
West 44<sup>th</sup> Street Better Block Association

Gordon Stanley  
West 44<sup>th</sup> Street Better Block Association

David Stuart  
West 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association

Elke Fears  
President, West 47th/48th Streets Block Association

Steve Herring  
Member, West 47th/48th Streets Block Association

Catherine Lafferty  
Member, West 47th/48th Streets Block Association

Jean-Daniel Noland  
Member, West 47th/48th Streets Block Association

James Bagues  
Member, West 47th/48th Streets Block Association

Jenny Troyer  
Member, West 47th/48th Streets Block Association

Stephen Belida  
Co-Chair, Hell's Kitchen West 50th and 51st Street Block Association

Maria Ortiz  
Member, West 55th Street Block Association

Christine Gorman  
President, West 55th Street Block Association

Barbara Knecht  
West 55th Street Block Association

Leslie Murphy  
Member, West 55th Street Block Association

Delores Rubin  
Member, West 55th Street Block Association

Joe Restuccia  
Executive Director, Clinton Housing Development Company

Mia Muratore  
Deputy Director, Hartley House

Robert Benfatto  
President, Hudson Yards Hell's Kitchen Alliance

Kevin P. Singleton  
Chairman, Hudson Yards Hell's Kitchen Alliance & Executive Vice President, TF  
Cornerstone Inc.

Patricia Maltezos  
Planning and Development Director, Hudson Yards / Hell's Kitchen Alliance

Barbara Blair  
President, Garment District Alliance

Jerry Scupp  
Vice President, Garment District Alliance

Aleta Lafargue  
President, Manhattan Plaza Tenant Association

Anita McDonagh  
Parc Vendome Community Affairs

Cc:

NY State Assembly Member Carl E. Heastie  
NY State Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal  
NY State Assembly Member Richard Gottfried  
NY State Senator Brad Hoylman  
NY State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
NY State Senator Robert Jackson  
Eric Adams, New York City Mayor  
Lorraine Grillo, First Deputy Mayor  
Anne Williams-Isom, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services  
Philip Banks, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety  
Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President  
Erik Bottcher, New York City Council District 3 Councilmember  
Jeffrey Lefrancois, Chair, Manhattan Community Board 4  
Chief Stephen Hughes, Commanding Officer, Patrol Borough Manhattan South  
Deputy Inspector Salvatore Comodo, Executive Officer, Patrol Borough Manhattan South  
Inspector Robert O'Hare, Midtown South Precinct Commanding Officer  
Deputy Inspector John L. O'Connell, Midtown North Precinct Commanding Officer  
Deputy Inspector Aaron C. Edwards, 17th Precinct Commanding Officer  
Deputy Inspector Angel L. Figueroa Jr., 13<sup>th</sup> Precinct Commanding Officer  
Captain Robert Gault, 10th Precinct Commanding Officer  
Alvin Bragg, District Attorney  
Lauren Curatolo, Midtown Community Court Director