

Good morning....my name is Matt Baney. I am the director of both HIV services and homeless medicine at St. Vincents Hospital. Our institution has a long and proud history of serving the sick poor of New York City, regardless of one's ability to pay. The importance of this legacy to our community is immeasurable.

Saint Vincents provides a unique and valuable service to the Chelsea/Village neighborhood. Our community is filled with unrecognized "pockets of poverty", areas that house individuals who rely on St. Vincents for medical care on a daily basis. Be they homeless, marginally housed, or living with the epidemic of HIV/AIDS it is our moral responsibility to maintain the health of the neighborhood that we have done since the founding of our hospital in 1849.

For example, Saint Vincents was at the forefront of HIV/AIDS in the early 1980's, providing medical care to those infected by the epidemic when many other institutions in the City were not willing

to do so. While other hospitals had staff that were placing food trays in the hallways outside patient rooms because they were afraid of the illness and would not enter, St Vincents moved forward courageously providing full services to every individual regardless of illness. Every patient was treated with respect, integrity, compassion and excellence, which is the mission of our organization. Today St Vincents operates the largest HIV program in the State of New York with over 5,000 active patients in treatment representing over 30,000 outpatient visits and approximately 1500 hospital admissions last year.

Our homeless program treats over 10,000 patients on an annual basis, with 55,000 patient visits and approximately 800 associated hospital admissions last year. We provide medical care to homebound elderly who would otherwise be institutionalized without our services. We assist the patient in maintaining dignity and self respect by living in his or her own homes as long as possible. These services are free of charge.

No patient has ever been turned away from our institution due to an inability to pay for services rendered. Both the homeless program and the HIV Center at St. Vincents are living proof of the important mission our hospital performs on a daily basis. To maintain these services, and improve the quality of life for countless individuals within our forgotten community, we require the building of a new state of the art facility. Without St. Vincents, our patients, each of whom has a story, would be lost. I want to put a face on each of these people; to remind the commission of the impact St. Vincents has in the neighborhood and in the lives of many. My colleagues and I are completely committed to carrying on the mission of our hospital, and I trust the commission will look favorably upon our request so that St. Vincents can carry on in the spirit of our namesake St. Vincent de Paul.

Thank you!