

Via: email and Mail

December 8, 2020

Attn: Jacquelyn Kilmer
Chief Executive Officer
Harlem United
306 Malcolm X Boulevard
New York, NY10027

RE: Methadone Clinics in the Harlem Community

Dear **Ms. Kilmer:**

My name is [REDACTED] and I'm a resident in the Mount Morris Park Historic District, located in Central Harlem, New York City.

As a concerned resident, I am writing about the number of methadone clinics that have plagued the Harlem community for decades in both East and Central Harlem, river to river. We have evidence that Harlem United and START Treatment & Recovery Centers and close to a dozen other clinics in the vicinity of 125th Street have facilitated these patients moving into neighborhoods and violating the integrity of our community, with little oversight provided. For many of us in our community "your clients threaten small businesses, degrade public safety, and severely impact the quality of our lives."

Our community is bombarded by constant reckless and abusive behavior by those attending these clinics, and **the lack of oversight and complicit behavior by your clinic and the others** has had a devastating impact on our well-being. We clearly understand your patients have their constitutional rights to walk freely on sidewalks. However, I would like to know what measures you and the others are taking to control their unlawful behavior, which includes activities such as loitering, harassment, and drug dealing and using. We have been monitoring the “do-nothing” and “say-nothing” attitudes by these clinics for years, and the lack of attention given to protect local residents, as well as our local schools, is not acceptable.

For many years, we residents have had a growing concern about the lackadaisical attitude of the owners of these clinics, which are located near our homes, schools, and faith institutions. Based on knowledgeable estimates, we have over a dozen clinics in the area, where anywhere from 3,500 to 4,500 patients roam and abuse our streets each day, all day long, and make where we live more prone to violent criminal activity. What’s more alarming is that, based on statistics conducted by the Greater Harlem Coalition, only 25 percent of people who attend Harlem opioid treatment programs live in Harlem. That means **75 percent of those who attend Harlem opioid treatment programs do not live in Harlem**, and commute here from as far away as Staten Island, and yet your clinics are under the misconception that “Black and non-white communities” will tolerate this lack of respect.

In addition, not only do the majority of people who attend opioid treatment programs in Harlem commute **from outside New York City**, there is an alarming 13 out of the 68 opioid treatment programs in all of New York City that are located in Harlem. Clearly, the over saturation and red-lining of Central and East Harlem with these clinics is a long-time discriminatory practice and undermines our capacity to accept anything more than what is mediocre in standards.

For the past 30 years living in Harlem, not one clinic, or collaborating hospital, city or state official, has ever provided a concrete solution to this chronic, structural red-lining problem. Given this fact, it is clear the individuals behind the decision to

approve the construction of these clinics, and wrongfully locate them in Harlem, all have a common false mindset that they collectively perceive non-white neighborhoods as inferior, and therefore we are more accommodating of social instabilities accompanied by high crime and systemic racial abuse.

As residents, we've repeatedly witnessed **unsafe practices** by many patients who visit the clinics. Our assessment has revealed that these individuals congregate in Marcus Garvey Park, specifically at the Richard Rodgers' Amphitheater(stage location) at the corners of West 123rd Street, 124th and 125th Streets on Lenox Avenue/Malcolm X Boulevard on both east and west sides of the block; Park Avenue at 125th; Lexington at 125th, etc. The debasing cavalier behaviors demonstrated by these individuals have continuously put all of us at risk, **especially in this fragile climate we're in today, necessitating both masks and social distancing**, and the proper practice of basic hygiene.

Particularly note that these would seem to be people who come into our community without wearing masks on the streets, and engage in non-hygienic activities including urinating in public, defecating, littering, loitering in large groups, and discarding needles and drugs such as crack, cocaine and oxytocin, on our sidewalks and on private property.

Many of us have worked with the two local precincts and narcotics divisions for almost two decades, since the late Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morris Morgenthau's era; however, the conditions have remained the same.

Despite the bombardment of clinics situated in Harlem, Mount Sinai Hospital has a new proposed plan to build more. According to Shawn Hill, the Co-founder of The Greater Harlem Coalition, "Mount Sinai plans to move less remunerative services (mental health and addiction programs specifically) onto West 124th Street." This will make room for more profitable care in their wealthier and whiter Morningside Heights campus, which is another classic example of systemic racism. By ignoring the actual health needs of the Harlem and East Harlem community, the Mount Sinai system is clearly creating a dichotomy between programs they locate in whiter neighborhoods and programs they locate in predominately non-white neighborhoods. Mount Sinai's presence on East 125th Street and Park Avenue, and West 124th Street and Lenox Avenue, continues to attract illegal drug dealers who prey upon the vulnerable men and women

seeking treatment, and impact the quality of life of our children, business owners, residents, and visitors."

We feel our constitutional and human rights are violated on a daily basis due to these elements in the area, as well as our quiet enjoyment of a peaceful life and our right to have access to quality living conditions, as is enjoyed in other predominately white neighborhoods. **Therefore, as stated, I am requesting and demanding that you and the other clinics cc'd here and highlighted below to furnish me and my community with a concrete plan in terms of how you intend to improve our safety in the area at the above-referenced locations outlined.** Below please find a link to a recent CBS story and a related article as well as images of our daily tribulation:

<https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2020/11/14/harlem-addiction-treatment-programs/>

<https://patch.com/new-york/harlem/harlem-group-asks-action-drug-use-homelessness>



Cc: Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
Mayor Bill de Blasio
U.S. Representative Adriano Espaillat
Dermot Shea - NYPD Commissioner
Chief Rodney K. Harrison
Howard A. Zucker, MD - Commissioner NYS DOH
Arlene González-Sánchez, Commissioner - NYS OASAS
Sean M. Byrne, Executive Deputy Commissioner - NYS OASAS
Peter Provet - President & CEO Odyssey House

Gregory James, Addiction Medicine Advisor - OASAS

Gale Brewer - Manhattan Borough President

Richard A. Carranza - New York City Schools Chancellor

Brian Benjamin New York State Senator

Inez Dickens - NYS Assembly Member

Scott Stringer - New York City Comptroller

Mark Levine - New York City Member

Diana Ayala - New York City Member

Robert Rodriguez - NYS Assembly Member

U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

Bill Perkins - NYC Council Member

Linda Rosenthal - NYC Council Member

Letitia Ann James - NYS Attorney General

Jumaane D. Williams - NYC Public Advocate

Cyrus Vance Jr. - Manhattan District Attorney

Calvin Solomon - Council Member

Deputy Inspector Andre M. Brown - Commanding Officer of the 28th's Precinct

Captain Christopher M. Henning - Commanding Officer of the 25th's Precinct

Shatic Mitchell - CB10 District Manager

Eric Adams - Brooklyn Borough President

Shaun Donovan - Mayoral Candidate

Alvin Bragg - NYC DA Candidate

Raymond J. McGuire - NYC Mayor Candidate

Tali Farhadian Weinstein - NYC DA Candidate

Mitchell J. Silver - Commissioner of NYC Parks

William Castro - Manhattan's Parks Borough Commissioner

Edward Grayson - Acting Commissioner of Department of Sanitation

Kenneth L. Davis, MD - President & CEO of the Mount Sinai Health System

Richard A. Friedman Co-Chair - The Boards of Trustees Mount Sinai Health System

Lawrence S. Brown Jr., MD, MPH, FACP, DFASAM - CEO of START Treatment & Recovery Centers

Edward Grayson - Acting Sanitation Commissioner

Joslyn Carter - Administrator of the Department of Homeless Services

Dr. Dave Chokski - Health Commissioner of New York City

Jeff Mays - The New York Times
A.G. Sulzberger - The New York Times
Dean P. Baquet - The New York Times
Aaron Elstein - Crain's Business
Georgett Roberts - New York Post
Gothamist
The City
Robert York - NY Daily News
Michelle Gotthelf - New York Post
Melanie West - WSJ
Nick Garber - Patch
Kwame Owusu-Kesse - Chief Executive Officer, Harlem Children's Zone
Mount Morris Park Community Improvement Association (MMPCIA)
Muckaram Taheraly - Chair Person of 125th's Business Improvement
District (BID)
Diane Collier - Chair Of The Board Of Directors - Uptown Grand Central
Dr. Deborah Kenny - Chief Executive Officer - Harlem Village Academies