



April 27, 2021

Greater Harlem Coalition  
Syderia Asberry-Chresfield, Cofounder  
Carolyn Brown, Cofounder  
Shawn Hill, Cofounder  
[tetshill@gmail.com](mailto:tetshill@gmail.com)

Dear Cofounders of the Greater Harlem Coalition,

The Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) is in receipt of your correspondence dated April 4, 2021. We thank you for expressing your concerns and consistently participating in efforts to ensure Harlem is a safe and thriving community.

There are a variety of OASAS addiction treatment programs serving the unique needs of the Harlem community and some of these programs have been in existence for over half a century. Integrating addiction treatment providers into the community ensures that addiction treatment services are available to community members without undue burden and that services are provided in a culturally responsive and appropriate manner. The Harlem addiction treatment providers, and indeed all OASAS certified treatment programs, strive to work with the communities in which they are located to be responsive and considerate neighbors.

OASAS will continue to require and enforce that addiction treatment providers in Harlem mobilize to ensure security is provided in accordance with OASAS requirements, that appointment times are staggered (to avoid large groups) and respected by clients attending the programs and that programs are ensuring that clients are not loitering unnecessary around the programs.

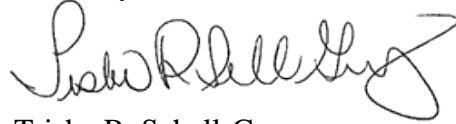
OASAS shares your concerns regarding the increase in illegal drug use and sale as well as the increase in homelessness in the community. However, these issues are outside of the purview of OASAS. OASAS programs do not have authority to police the community. Such issues are properly raised with the local government authorities, such as the New York Police Department and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, among other local entities, which are equipped with the legal authority and community based tools required to increase policing and street level outreach in the community. OASAS is a willing partner in these activities and has begun meeting with NYCDOHMH and involved state agencies to discuss these issues but does not have the authority to lead these activities.

Racial and ethnic minorities often face significant barriers to accessing addiction treatment services. Among those barriers is a lack of community-based, culturally competent providers, transportation barriers and insurance coverage/affordable services. OASAS strives to ensure that addiction prevention, treatment and recovery programs are culturally responsive and are available to everyone regardless of their availability to pay. OASAS ensures that all individuals in need of treatment, have access to such treatment. As New York continues to recover from the twin crises of the opioid epidemic and the COVID pandemic, it has never been

more important to ensure that local, community-based services are available for every New Yorker without undue burden.

OASAS providers in the Harlem region will continue to work locally to ensure that Harlem thrives and will make every effort to be conscientious neighbors. OASAS, as a state agency, and the local Harlem OASAS providers, would be willing to engage in local efforts, led by local government entities, to address issues raised in the Harlem community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trisha R. Schell-Guy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Trisha R. Schell-Guy  
Acting General Counsel

Cc: Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez  
Sean Byrne  
Manuel Mosquera  
Tracey Collins  
Zoraida Diaz