



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

December 6, 2017

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Carl E. Heastie
NYS Assembly Speaker
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. John Flanagan
NYS Senate Leader
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Available Opioid Treatment Center Funding

Dear Governor Cuomo, Speaker Heastie and Leader Flanagan:

I have been closely following developments in the potential siting of an Opioid Treatment Center in Broome County, which would reportedly be located at the former Broome Developmental Center building and would receive \$2.7 million in state funding for treatment and one-time startup costs. In addition to providing this patient-ready facility and funding, the state would also agree to cover any deficits the Center might accrue as it provides life-saving work for Broome County residents. I would like to thank you for your proactivity in addressing the opioid crisis along with your willingness to explore new avenues, such as this arrangement, to help counties address their own opioid issues.

It has come to my attention that, for unfounded reasons, the Broome County Legislature has chosen not to act on this arrangement and is delaying a vote on whether or not to accept the state's offer until January 2018 at the earliest. Despite this foot dragging, the proposal has engendered vocal bipartisan support from Broome County Executive Jason Garnar, NYS Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, and NYS Senator Fred Ashkar, all of whom understand the impact that this Center could have on opioid addiction in Broome County. While I sympathize with them and applaud their efforts, I am writing today to express Erie County's interest in pursuing this project should Broome County fail to act.

Following my January 2016 Executive Order recognizing an opioid epidemic locally, Erie County established an Opioid Epidemic Task Force and began organizing a community-wide response to this public health crisis. We have established partnerships across the public, private, law enforcement and not-for-profit sectors to target opioid abuse, develop and implement interventions, and assist individuals and families dealing with addicted loved ones. Erie County has invested resources in a 24-hour addiction hotline and has continued to aggressively combat the opioid epidemic on many fronts, including leading the state on naloxone trainings for first responders and family members. Many of Erie County's novel opioid epidemic programs aim to bring persons struggling with opioid addiction into evidenced-based treatment. The addition of a Treatment Center, such as the one being proposed for Broome County, would be a major development and would greatly reinforce our efforts in the fight

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against opioid addiction here in Erie County and the surrounding counties within the Western New York Economic Development Zone.

I thank you for your concerted efforts to combat this scourge on our society. Like you I understand the gravity of the opioid issue. I am honored to serve on the National City/County Task Force on Opioid Addiction and have not only seen the problem from a national perspective but have travelled around New York state, including Broome County, to dialogue with elected officials and community members about the dangers of opioids and discuss best practices in addressing addiction. Like you, I am also always looking for ways to better protect residents. While I have no interest in preventing the siting of an Opioid Treatment Center in Broome County, Erie County stands ready to act in the event Broome County does not.

Thank you again for your commitment to this issue. I look forward to discussing an Erie County Opioid Treatment Center site with you in further detail at your convenience.

Sincerely yours,



Mark C. Poloncarz
Erie County Executive

MCP/pa

cc: Members of the WNY NYS Delegation
Hon. Fred Ashkar, NYS Senator
Hon. Donna Lupardo, NYS Assemblywoman
Hon. Jason Garnar, Broome County Executive
Broome County Legislature
Dr. Gale Burstein, MD, MPH, FAAP, Commissioner, Erie County Department of Health
Michael Ranney, CRC-R, LMHC, Commissioner, Erie County Department of Mental Health
Arlene González-Sánchez, Commissioner, NYS Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services