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The Hon. Ben Kallos
New York City Council
244 E 93rd St
New York, NY 10128

The Hon. Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President
1 Centre Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Mr. Russell Squire
Chair of Community Board 1
505 Park Avenue
Suite 620
New York, NY 10022

Dear Councilmember Kallos, Borough President Brewer, and Mr. Squire,

My name is Sujit Sheth and I am a member of the faculty at Weill Cornell Medical College. I am Chief of the Division of Pediatric Hematology Oncology and our facility is located in the New York Presbyterian / Weill Cornell Campus at 68th Street and York Avenue, making us only a couple of blocks away from the New York Blood Center.

During my 10 years at Weill Cornell and for 15 years prior to that while I was on the Faculty at Columbia University Medical Center, our programs have worked collaboratively with New York Blood Center on countless occasions, and our proximity to each other has played a vital role in our successful partnership. Several key institutions that are all in the radius of a few blocks, including the Blood Center, Weill Cornell/NY Presbyterian, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Rockefeller University, the Hospital for Special Surgery. The expertise of the Blood Center is invaluable to all of these institutions and we are all able to meet in person at one or the other institution.

Over the years, I have had numerous research meetings at the NYBC campus, and attended a variety of important seminars and conferences there. I have long collaborated with and continue to work with with Drs Mohan Narla and Karina Yazdanbaksh, both recipients of significant and important research grants from the NIH, and in the past with Drs Beth Shaz and Beau Mitchell. This research focusses on orphan diseases like Sickle Cell disease and Thalassemia, and is critical to the advancement of treatments for these conditions. The investigators' laboratories being as close as they are allows this research to flourish, and this would come to a standstill if the Center moves, since we would not be able to get critical patient samples to them in a timely manner – many of these must be processed immediately. We are also currently working on strategies to increase

blood donations through a variety of initiatives at the Blood Center and have had several planning meetings and reviews for the same. In addition, our trainees have participated in learning sessions as well as been part of research laboratories at the Center. This was possible in part because they could easily go over to listen to talks, or work in the labs there and still be able to attend to their duties at our institution. This would also be significantly adversely affected by increasing the distance between our institutions.

While the Covid-19 crisis has demonstrated how effectively the life science model can spring into action, it has also underscored how partners can benefit from the dynamic interaction. Life sciences ecosystems require proximity and access to three key stakeholders: Research, capital and institutions. Center East proposes to bring these stakeholders together under one roof to support bioscience-based companies from startup to mature biotech companies. This model is critical to ensure a swift response to future pandemics and will house companies searching for cures to thousands of blood-related diseases, including infectious diseases, sickle cell and AIDS.

The physical location of the New York Blood Center in this hub of medical and scientific institutions is key to the continuity of so many research, educational and clinical programs, and if the Center were forced to move away, it would create a void that we would not be able to fill at all.

Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,



Sujit Sheth, MD
Professor of Pediatrics
Division Chief, Pediatric Hematology and Oncology