



Department of Public Health

Monroe County, New York

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County Executive

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Commissioner of Public Health

ARPA – RFP Coordinator
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39 West Main Street #200
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Dear Review Committee:

As Commissioner of Monroe County Department of Public Health, it is my pleasure to write in support of St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center (SJNC)'s application for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Opportunities in response to the recent Monroe County Request for Proposals (RFP).

SJNC was established in Rochester in 1993 in response to a community need for accessible and affordable health care services. Over its almost 30-year history, SJNC has delivered primary health care, dental, mental health counseling, and social services to thousands of uninsured and under-insured people in the Greater Rochester region. The organization does not accept private or public insurance reimbursements and relies upon individual donations from community members, as well as, grant funding. SJNC is a vital partner and collaborator with dozens of community-based organizations, the two major health systems in our region, numerous Colleges and Universities, and the Monroe County Department of Public Health.

The Neighborhood Center is housed in three conjoined former homes, each well over 100 years old. While these were renovated and repurposed years ago, provide a welcoming and inclusive environment, they are in desperate need of renovation and repair. Priorities include a new roof and elevator, additional insulation to prevent ice damming, and renovation of the waiting area, exam rooms, and dental operatories. Providing this funding would not only provide vital support to SJNC, but it would be a significant investment in the overall health of the Greater Rochester community.

When individuals have nowhere else to turn, they seek refuge, support, and health services from the Neighborhood Center. In the context of their recent strategic plan, they aim to partner with community-based organizations to reach more potential patients/clients and to provide services to those that are directly impacted by racism, gun violence, depression, COVID, inadequate access to health care, and much more. They hope to collaborate with faith-based communities and neighborhood gathering places to meet folks "where they're at" both literally and figuratively. At a time when the primary care and mental health services are stretched to a breaking point, and wait lists for services are exorbitantly long, SJNC provides unheralded access of just a few days for the most serious and urgent of matters and a few weeks for more routine care.

SJNC plays a vital role in the Greater Rochester community providing services and health access to individuals who would have nowhere else to go, the most vulnerable and those who are most in need of accessible and affordable health care—including the working poor, undocumented immigrants, the uninsured, and a disproportionate number of people of color.

I strongly support St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center's request for funding.

Sincerely,


Michael D. Mendoza, MD, MPH, MS
Commissioner of Public Health

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