

**TESTIMONY OF DONNA MORAVICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
SOUTHSIDE HOSPITAL, BAY SHORE, NY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND COMMUNICATIONS  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY.**

Southside Hospital (SSH) is a 341-bed tertiary hospital, located in south shore of western Suffolk County in Bay Shore, NY, and has been serving over 1.4 million residents. Southside Hospital has over 2,500 employees and has an economic impact of approximately \$900M (Health Association of New York State). Southside Hospital is regionally recognized for its specialized services, including the American College Surgeons first verified trauma program in Long Island, cardiac surgery, neuroscience, and obstetrics & gynecology. In addition, SSH has a broad array of hospital-based ambulatory services. Moreover, Southside Hospital services a diverse community and is the safe haven for many, seeing over 71,000 emergency visits and having approximately 21,000 discharges per year.

Southside sits within 1000 feet of three major tributaries that flow into the Great South Bay. Southside's proximity makes it extremely vulnerable to storms, tides and heavy rainfall. On October, 29 2012, Southside Hospital faced one of the worst storms of the century called Superstorm Sandy, which produced an even higher level of challenge given its landfall during a high tide cycle and corresponding full moon.

The hospital immediately acted to protect its core hospital infrastructure assets including electrical switchgear, its generators, as well as telephone and IT rooms. On the eve of the storm, extraordinary efforts and costs were incurred to mitigate the high risk of this storm. At a great expense, the hospital implemented protective measures such as bringing in pumpers and installing storm doors to dam the water and protect the electrical gear. Fortunately, water levels rose but halted before they breached these protective measures. As a result, Southside was one of the only healthcare facilities in the southwestern portion of Suffolk County that remained opened and continued to provide care to our patients and the community we serve.

At all times, hospital staff performed heroically and was able to treat patients during and after the storm. Critical patients were identified and transferred to one of the other tertiary hospitals in the Northwell Health system. The hospital also became a safe haven for those who needed shelter, especially those dependent on electrically powered devices in their homes.

Fortunately, through significant efforts, the hospital was able to weather the storm successfully despite record water levels. If the protective measures were breached, not only would Southside's main infrastructure be impacted long-term but its patient and the communities we serve would have been compromised.

Subsequent to the storm, the hospital has taken many actions including infrastructure improvements and continual emergency management training to lessen the impact of future storms. Nevertheless, a continued investment in storm mitigation infrastructure protections is still required.

Post-storm, Southside, at its own expense, began to invest in necessary remediation infrastructure protections. During the past four years, the hospital has spent approximately six millions dollars in these capital improvements.

With the recently awarded FEMA grant funds, Southside is now able to elevate critical equipment to secure elevated locations. Additionally, with the help of the grant, the hospital will be hardening the building envelope including windows, roofing, and other points of access.

Finally, in addition to assessing new preventive infrastructure improvements, we continue to train all staff on emergency management and regularly explore best practices to protect against a future storm event. We thank you for allowing us to tell our story.