

# **Al-Hassan Kanu, Candidate for New York City Council District 27, Announces Policies to Prepare Southeast Queens for the next Pandemic**

Today, Al-Hassan Kanu, community advocate and candidate for the 27<sup>th</sup> Council district, announced his plans to help prepare Southeast Queens for the next health crisis we face.

He outlined three proposals that ensures community input, uses the lessons we learned from dealing with the novel coronavirus, and his experience working for the past two Council members who represented the 27<sup>th</sup> Council District, to ensure these policies are effectively advanced.

“Even before COVID-19 upended our city, Southeast Queens already lacked the infrastructure for residents to receive the medical attention and care we need. My plan will help bring the resources back to the community by diverting funds in city departments where they belong, and empowering our community boards to ensure city agencies remove the red tape involved when we it comes to our health. Not only will this plan help families live a healthier life now, but if we ever have to go through another pandemic, our community hospitals will have the additional capacity they need in an emergency” said Al-Hassan Kanu.

Upon taking office Al-Hassan Kanu will:

## *1) Restore funding to HHS*

By working with his colleagues in the Council, roughly \$339 million dollars can be shifted from the FDNY’s EMS budget back to the city’s Health and Hospital Corporation system. The EMS budget was in the HHS budget until then Mayor Rudy Giuliani moved it in 1996. But it simply does not make any sense for ambulances to be in the FDNY’s budget when the vast majority of this program is coordinated with the hospitals as they rush to get people the care they need. When many hospital closures took place over the last few years across the borough, putting this money back where it belongs will give the hospitals the capacity they need to stop future closures and better coordinate their services.

## *2) Create a task force to address Southeast Queens’ health needs*

Al-Hassan Kanu will create a task force out of his office to prioritize the communities health needs and effectively advocate for them. It will include labor leaders, community boards, health care professionals, elected officials, and community advocates, so those in Albany, City Hall, and government agencies know that Council District 27 is speaking with one voice to advocate for its needs.

## *3) Reduce red tape through the 197A process*

By funding Queens community boards 12 and 13 to develop a plan that would create a stronger health system in Southeast Queens, which would then have to be implemented through changes by the city agencies using the 197A process. This ensures the policies that are coming out of City Hall are ones that Southeast Queens truly needs and helps ensure positive outcomes for residents.

“We cannot just think about now, this plan sets up the ground work we will need going forward to maintain and grow our quality of life” Al-Hassan Kanu continued. “It’s imperative that the next Council member representing this district not just know how the city works but also how to work in it, and because of my experience, I’m confident this plan will work.”

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