



Published in the

Newsday

De Blasio's \$82.2 Billion Budget Would Pump Cash to Hospitals

April 26, 2016

By Matthew Chayes

Mayor Bill de Blasio on Tuesday presented his proposed \$82.2 billion budget for New York City's upcoming fiscal year.

The mayor also proposed a plan to resuscitate the city's crippling public-hospital system, which is hemorrhaging money from choosing to treat hundreds of thousands of uninsured patients who aren't in the United States legally and cost the city more than \$2 billion.

Nursing springtime allergies and standing next to a portrait at City Hall of Alexander Hamilton, de Blasio said the fiscal blueprint is about \$100 million more than a draft he presented earlier this year. The proposal is about \$3.7 billion more than the \$78.5 billion budget as adopted at the beginning of the current fiscal year.

"We are carefully budgeting in an environment in which our relationship with other levels of government has become uncertain in many ways," de Blasio said.

As with budgets from his first two years in office, the Democratic mayor described his plan for 2017 using a series of aspirational adjectives: "Progressive, Honest, Responsible Government."

About 475,000 patients, a third of those at New York City Health + Hospitals , whose budget is about \$7.5 billion, are undocumented. Without a rescue plan, the shortfall is expected to reach \$1.8 billion by the 2020 fiscal year. Next year's new funds for hospitals include \$160 million.

The system, which was recently renamed from the Health and Hospitals Corporation, treats about 1.4 million people a year.

In January, de Blasio unveiled a \$82.1 billion budget, the beginning of the process that lasts until June with City Council input and ends at the end of that month with a ceremonial handshake in the City Hall rotunda with the council speaker. The budget is legally due by July, the beginning of the fiscal year.

De Blasio, a Democrat elected in 2013, said he was heartened the threatened cuts by the state — he did not mention Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo by name, though he was the proposer — did not materialize, such as to the city university system.



Published in the

Newsday

"Cuts were attempted and beaten back," de Blasio said during presentations that lasted much of the afternoon, explaining: "The reason that those cuts were averted was a lot of people in this city stood up and joined us."

When tallied against a promised Citywide Savings Plan, city funds in the plan are \$59.36 billion compared with \$58.82 billion, according to budget documents released by the mayor's office.

Maria Doulas, of the business-backed Citizens Budget Commission, questioned the wisdom of increasing spending — by what the commission estimates to be \$2.5 billion in de Blasio's proposed budget, compared to last year's.

"Agencies are really not self-funding new needs," Doulas said.

The administration points to its savings program and directions to agencies to find additional savings.

The budget also takes into account cuts by the Obama administration to terrorism funding to New York City. De Blasio said he remains "surprised" by the cuts and vows to "fight the impact."