Councilman Garodnick, members of the Committee, Good Morning. My name is Jeannine M. Jennette, Executive Director of Public Safety at Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) in northern Manhattan. I am here to speak in strong support of Council bill 0789-2012 which would prohibit vending on the sidewalk abutting no standing zones that are adjacent to hospitals. Attached to my written testimony is a letter that the Executive Vice President and Dean at CUMC, Dr. Lee Goldman, wrote to Councilman Garodnick in support of this bill. I ask that it be included in the record along with my testimony.

In recent years, we have seen significant growth in the number of vendors, both general and food, in the area surrounding CUMC and New York Presbyterian, our affiliated hospital. At the center of our campus, the superblock bordered by 165th and 168th Streets, Broadway, and Fort Washington Avenue, last Thursday afternoon, there were nineteen separate vendors; this does not include the two newsstands or the two ice cream trucks that generally park on 165th and 168th Street later in the day. This also does not include the vendors nearby or even across the street or out in front of other buildings on campus.

Over half of the vendors on the superblock were located adjacent to a no standing zone, including two that were parked directly next to a fire hydrant, and several located close to the emergency room entrance where the ambulances pull up to bring in patients. This cluster of vendors, especially towards the corner of 168th Street and Broadway, creates tremendous traffic problems, both pedestrian and vehicular, near the carts, and makes it more difficult for staff, students, visitors, ambulances, and especially patients, many of whom are disabled and limited in some other way, to access our facilities. Imagine coming out of the subway, as many of our patients do, and being caught in pedestrian traffic that makes it harder to reach your doctor's office. Imagine trying to pull up in a car, taxi, or Access-A-ride van to get into the hospital, even the emergency room, and not being able to get as close as possible. Council bill 0789-2012 will address this situation and make it easier for those who really need to get to the hospital to do so.

While the vending carts themselves are obviously on the sidewalk and not on streets, most of these carts have to be dropped off and picked up every day by a van or
truck powerful enough to tow them. They also receive deliveries of supplies throughout the day. This means that often times, not only are the carts blocking the sidewalk, they ard/or their delivery trucks are actually blocking the street, including blocking no standing zones. I should also note that many vendors will often leave their cars in metered spots adjacent to where they are located for the entire day, thus exacerbating the traffic situation on our block even further. This is illegal but very difficult to enforce.

Prior to coming to Columbia in 2002, I was a member of the New York City Police Department. From 2001-2002 I served as commander of the 67th Precinct, which includes the area around SUNY Downstate Hospital. Even back then we had problems with vendors taking up valuable sidewalk and street space and making it more difficult for people to get to the hospital.

Certainly, stricter enforcement of the Consumer protection laws, as well as all health, and environmental regulations will help, and we work closely with our local precinct to try to maintain order, but the situation around CUMC/NYP has simply gotten out of hand. I fear that it could get worse, that we will see more vendors, taking up more space, and making it more difficult for people to access the health care they need. Please pass 0789-2012. Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.