



Neighborhood opposition kills Horizon Health's deal for 600 Delaware Ave.

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Horizon Corps.' plan to open a behavioral health outpatient treatment center downtown has been quashed by hesitant neighbors, according to CEO [Anne Constantino](#).

The agency had planned to buy Alliance Advisory Group's 600 Delaware Ave. building and move from its existing downtown leased site at 77 Broadway.

The space, Constantino said, would have been perfect. It's on a bus line, has on-site parking and is near the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and other social-service providers.

Horizon had to withdraw its offer after opposition from neighbors and nearby business owners led to a denial from the Buffalo Common Council on the required special use permit, as well as on its appeal.

Constantino said she was taken completely by surprise, especially following the push for mental-health services for people from all walks of life during the pandemic, as well as other similar medical services opening nearby. The 29,000-square-foot building would have been used for outpatient counseling for individuals needing mental health and substance-use services, including child psychiatry.

"We did our research and as a medical-service provider with licensed professionals, and looking at what our colleagues have done, we should have been labeled as a medical provider too," she said.

Constantino said it was a clear case of NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard), especially since the agency provides similar services in the region that have been growing in demand throughout the pandemic.

"One hundred percent, they said 'it was nothing against Horizon, but'..." she said. "Clearly, they did not want us there."

Building owner 600 Delaware LLC listed the two-story building for sale last summer for \$3.7 million.

According to WGRZ-Channel 2, Allentown residents objected to the project at a public hearing in November, saying the neighborhood already had too many similar treatment facilities nearby. A hotel manager from the Residence Inn by Marriott up the block complained the proposed clinic was not appropriate within the neighborhood setting.

Horizon operates five affiliated companies with combined revenue of about \$64 million and nearly 1,000 employees. It is one the region's largest behavioral-health providers, with inpatient addiction facilities in Niagara County, a detox facility downtown and outpatient programs across the region.

Constantino said the agency will look for another site downtown.

"We'll continue to look for the right opportunity in a more welcoming community," she said.