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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Legal Aid Statement on City's Decision to Relocate Homeless New Yorkers From UWS Hotel to Family Shelter

(NEW YORK, NY) – Judith Goldiner, Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society, issued the following statement concerning Mayor Bill de Blasio's decision to relocate homeless New Yorkers from the Upper West Side's Lucerne Hotel to a family shelter in Manhattan:

“It is truly disgraceful that the de Blasio Administration capitulated so quickly to Upper West Side NIMBYism, putting our clients at increased risk in the middle of an unprecedented public health crisis, which has already claimed the lives of 104 homeless New Yorkers. We are also concerned with the dangerous precedent this decision sets to the great detriment of our clients going forward, prejudicing the City's ability to fully advocate for the homeless in these situations. Lastly, it is particularly egregious that the City will have to uproot other homeless New Yorkers from their current shelter, disrupting their lives during a pandemic, in order to make room for these clients, who did not have to be moved in the first place.

Although these single adults will be relocated to a non-congregate family shelter with private rooms, there is no legal or moral justification forcing the City to upend the lives of some of New York's most vulnerable in such a callous manner. Legal Aid will continue to monitor this situation and we are considering all options.”

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org