

Hochul selects Sen. Brian Benjamin for lieutenant gov.

Gov. Kathy Hochul on Thursday announced the selection of Brian Benjamin for lieutenant governor.

A press release stated, "Benjamin and Hochul have previously worked together on several key issues, including fighting the opioid epidemic and boosting addiction recovery programs, supporting MWBE business owners and making it easier for New Yorkers to vote."

Benjamin previously served as New York state senator for District 30 - which encompasses Harlem, East Harlem and the Upper West Side - chairman of the Senate Committee on Revenue and Budget, and senior assistant majority leader, where he distinguished himself as a leader in criminal justice reform and affordable housing. Benjamin remains heavily involved in his community in Harlem.

"I believe that governing is about working together. Teamwork is the essence of effective leadership, and it is more important than ever as we confront the urgent problems facing the state," Hochul said. "My administration is going to attract the best and the brightest - people who share my values of working hard for the people of this state and who will get the job done - and that includes the newest member, Sen. Brian Benjamin, who has agreed to serve as my lieutenant governor. There is so much work to do, and I am grateful to have him by my side as we implement our vision for a safer, healthier and fairer New York."

Benjamin said, "I want to thank

Gov. Hochul for trusting me with the incredible honor of serving alongside her as lieutenant governor. Gov. Hochul is a collaborator who makes sure everyone has a seat at the table, and, like me, is laser-focused on listening to the needs of New Yorkers and empowering local leaders. We have a strong history of collaboration that will help us to hit the ground running immediately as we help guide New York through this challenging moment in history."

Benjamin was born in Harlem to a Caribbean mother who came to this country seeking new opportunities. Though they didn't have a college education, his parents were fortunate enough to find well-paying union jobs, which allowed them to provide Benjamin and his siblings with a middle-class upbringing. After graduating from high school in New York City, Benjamin sought the quality education his parents had dreamed of providing him with, earning his undergraduate degree in public policy from Brown University and his MBA from Harvard Business School.

During his time in the New York State Senate, Benjamin successfully pushed for the divestment of the state public pension funds from private prisons in 2018, and the following year he introduced a bill to forbid state-chartered banks from such investments as well, which helped pressure Bank of America to end its relationship with Geo Group and Core Civic. Benjamin's proposal to keep rent-controlled apartments affordable was a part of the history-making Tenant Protection Act of 2019.

Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare

Portage Road staff celebrates with leaders, North Buffalo patient



Brian McDonough of North Buffalo is shown upon hearing his surgical procedure was Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare's 10,000th.

Continued from Page 1 and I'm just glad I'm here," McDonough said.

Endl performed the procedure, which he said "involves putting a new lens in your eye to allow you to see clearly and drive at night."

He said the surgery would enable McDonough to continue pursuing his passion - and much more - as he returns to an active lifestyle.

Endl said McDonough underwent a similar procedure on his second eye "to get it evened up. And he just happens to be our 10,000th procedure."

"I'm really excited to be doing this."

When informed McDonough would now be able to continue skydiving, Endl laughed and quipped, "Well, he's going to see a lot better."

Sara Lucas assisted Endl in the procedure. "We're so glad it worked well for him," she said.

Kathleen Otto, who serves as director of marketing, said this procedure was reason to celebrate. The Tuesday occasion featured banners, noisemakers, balloons, champagne and prizes. Despite a rather busy afternoon of patient visits, evaluations and treatments, more than a dozen staff participated in the event.

"We are just so delighted to be able to celebrate our 10,000th patient today," Otto said. "We opened about five years ago, with a lot of struggles, and we've made it through COVID. And not only are we excited to celebrate this milestone, we're looking forward to



Above: Dr. Michael Endl with Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino. • Below: A cake was part of the festivities.



opening and enlarging our business, adding multi-specialties, more operating rooms and between surgeries that are not only involving our clients. We are looking to add specialties in the very near future as we grow."

Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino, who attended this event with Town of Niagara Supervisor Lee Wallace and Councilman Marc Carpenter, offered praise to Fichte,

Endl & Elmer Eyecare for what it has done in Niagara County and for its achievements - particularly over the past 18 months.

"In business, it's often hard to achieve milestones like this because everyone is struggling to really find their place, even more specifically during this pandemic thing," Restaino said. "So, these professionals here, it doesn't surprise me that they've been able to maintain their type of consistency with the patients, the clients. I'm really proud of the fact that everyone was able to celebrate this. From my perspective, just to be included in this is an honor."

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