

PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING, April 20, 2015

PRESENT

Steven Froot
Lisa Daub
Sylvia Alexander
Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN
Chaya Berman
Rachel Sprung

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair
Committee Vice Chair
CB 8 - Committee member
President, NYSNA, CB 8 resident
Student, Lehman Nurse Practitioner program
Student, Lehman Nurse Practitioner program

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. at the Kingsbridge Library.

Minutes: No review of minutes of March 16, 2015 meeting due to lack of a quorum

Presentation (unscheduled)

Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez
President, New York State Nurses Association
Registered Nurse at Montefiore Medical Center ER

Ms. Sheridan-Gonzalez, who lives in the district, has been a nurse at Montefiore Medical Center for over 30 years and is President of the New York State Nurses Association. She and her fellow nurses at Montefiore, in the context of ongoing contract negotiations, are raising concerns about hospital staffing levels and community rights to good hospital care, which has in their view deteriorated as a result of declining nursing staff. She indicated that contract negotiations are not centered on salaries. According to Ms. Sheridan-Gonzalez, the current 1:6 nurse-to-patient ratio is insufficient; the Union's position is that a 1:4 ratio is appropriate, but 1:5 should be viewed as the minimum. Some units, such as pediatric ICU, require two nurses per patient. Although a hiring freeze in effect from September 2014 through April 2015 was lifted recently, she reported that newer nurses are getting burned-out and leaving. Nurses' complaints topped 25,000 last year. The move to more electronic documentation has its benefits, but it detracts from the time nurses can devote to patient care. The hospital system is reducing beds while converting to more outpatient services. The emergency room is very crowded, with long waits. Patients are increasingly admitted, not to a hospital room, but rather to a bed in a hallway or repurposed lounge area, due to lack of hospital rooms. Patients at hospital outpatient clinics often wait six months to see a specialist and end up in the ER. The speaker would like the Community Board to send a letter to Montefiore supporting the Union's concerns, as did Bronx Community Board 7.

Chair's Report

Mr. Froot discussed a proposal by Special Citizens Futures Unlimited (SCFU) to open a five-person group home (Individual Residential Alternative) for young adults with autism on Delafield Avenue between West 261st and 263rd Streets. The public hearing to consider the proposal is scheduled for May 18, 2015, and the Committee discussed potential North Riverdale venues for the hearing. The proposed location of the group home is in close proximity to other group homes operated by SCFU, one of which was the subject of the Committee's consideration only last June. The Board will be in a position to vote at its June meeting on whatever resolution the Committee adopts with respect to the new location. DOHMH has final approval.

Old Business

Budget Recommendations: The committee discussed capital and expense budget recommendations for 2017 and a possible change in our request for ISS for RMHA. Vice Chair Lisa Daub will follow up with RMHA on the funding for Innovative Services for Seniors (ISS), a geriatric mental health program focused on healthy independent living for the elderly.

Request by DOHMH for top 5 health concerns: Mr. Froot lead a second discussion of the issue, with the result that the following concerns will be reported to DOHMH:

- Obesity and resulting Type 2 diabetes, causing debilitating illness that will strain society's ability to provide the required care
- Alzheimers/dementia and related issues, including lack of home care that would allow people to remain in their own homes
- Rats/vermin in certain areas with concentrations of unsecured trash
- Untreated mental illness due to low reimbursement rates & availability of care
- Smoking and its related illnesses

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The Committee will hold its next meeting and public hearing at 7:00 PM on Monday May 18 at Park Gardens Rehabilitation & Nursing Center, located at 6585 Broadway between West 260th-261st Streets, Bronx, NY 10471.

Prepared by Lisa Daub, Vice Chair
Approved by Steven Froot, Chair
Health, Hospitals & Social Services Committee