

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

**MINUTES OF THE HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE MEETING, October 21, 2013**

PRESENT

Steven Froot
Michael Heller
Lisa Daub
Sylvia Alexander
Beverly Fettman
Dana Lennon
Joyce Pilsner
Xaxia Sanchez
Beverly Fettman
Robert Fanuzzi
Maria Khury
Lalane McAnn
Roland Lathose
Bernadette Ferrara
Marion Koenig

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair
Committee Vice-Chair
CB 8 – Committee member
CB 8 Chair
CB 8 Vice Chair
Lehman Nurse Practitioner student
Lehman Nurse Practitioner student
Animals Saved by Grace
Animals Saved by Grace

The meeting was held at the Board Office and called to order at 7:40 p.m.

Minutes: The minutes of the September 16, 2013 meeting were accepted as submitted.

Chair's Report

The Chair attended an Affordable Care Act presentation on October 10 at Jacobi Medical Center. The forum revealed that fourteen providers are offering plans via the New York State exchange for individuals and employers (small businesses with under 50 employees). The NY exchange is known as "New York State of Health." Access via Internet is at nystateofhealth.ny.gov There was discussion about problems being experienced by the federal exchange (for states that do not create their own exchange), but the New York State Exchange seems to be running well after initial difficulties in the first few days due to enormous volume. There are currently 2.6 million uncovered in New Yorkers, and the hope is that 1.1 million of these individuals will obtain coverage via the NY exchange over the next three years. Mr. Froot suggested that the Committee might want to consider a forum in the next year devoted to publicizing and explaining the sign-up procedure on the exchange by individuals and small businesses), possibly with the

involvement of “navigators” paid by the federal government to facilitate use of the exchanges.

The other event noted on the meeting agenda, a forum relating to underage drinking that was to be held at the Children’s Aid Society in Manhattan, had been cancelled.

Underage Drinking Forum

Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy, MS/HS 141 turned out to be unavailable for the underage drinking forum and as a result the forum was postponed from October 21. Instead, we are able to secure In-Tech Academy, MS/HS 368 for Monday, November 18. Mike Heller will take a look at the space and coordinate operations with school staff, which has been very cooperative.

The program will primarily target parents, but children may attend. The program will begin with the presentation of the student produced film, “Under 21, Why We Drink.” Potential panelists include a pediatric toxicologist and emergency room physician at Montefiore, and speakers from the public health world who will address psychological and social aspects of underage drinking. The Chair has been or will be in touch with Partnership for a Healthier NYC (Bronx division), the Riverdale Mental Health Association and substance abuse counselors at local middle and high schools. It is hoped that several students from In-Tech Academy will participate in the panel for purposes of the Q&A session that will follow presentations by some of the panelists.

The Chair mentioned that State Senator Klein has offered to participate in the panel, based on his sponsorship of legislation, known as “Card Hard,” that imposes penalties on establishments that serve underage patrons and youth who use fake ID cards. The Committee discussed whether it was advisable to invite elected officials to participate. It was also noted that the focus of the forum was the problem of underage drinking and the effect on young people, rather than on strategies to enforce the drinking age. It was also mentioned that Councilman Cabrera had some experience in substance abuse counseling, and a suggestion was made to reach out to Mothers Against Drunk Driving. It was also suggested that we might want to reach out to local colleges, although it was the sense of the Committee that underage drinking among college age youth was a significantly different subject area and it was noted that some effort was made last spring to reach out to Manhattan College, without success.

Presentation: Animals Saved By Grace (Bronx Stray Animal Crisis)

Marion Koenig and Bernadette Ferrara spoke about need for a Bronx animal shelter. The goal is to organize community boards to advocate with the City to build a facility in our borough. The only City facility in the Bronx is a part-time, storefront “Pet Receiving Center” on Fordham Road, which offers no services and from which animals (cats and dogs) deposited there, no matter how dire their condition, must then be transported to the shelter in Manhattan, which itself is overloaded. Ms. Ferrara is a member of CB 11 and active on the stray/feral animal issue via the Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance.

The Bronx and Queens do not have animal shelters, per Local Law 59, which omitted shelter requirements for those two boroughs when DOHMH was placed in charge of stray animal care, even though DOHMH is authorized to fund new shelters. Feral/stray cats are Mmes. Koenig's and Ferrara's focus. In their view, the gap in facilities is causing a crisis in caring for stray animals in the Bronx. A pair of breeding cats can have a huge number of offspring; spaying and neutering of feral cats is an extremely important means of limiting the population. There is no sufficient "trap-neuter-return" (TNR) program in the Bronx. Feral cats are not adoptable, because of their fear of people, but can live healthy lives outdoors and need not be brought to shelters, where they will be killed if not adopted (adoption is usually not possible after a feral (born wild) kitten reaches 8 weeks). The two speakers are engaged in advocacy with elected officials, and are coming to us as a start. They may offer a proposed board resolution and may speak at the gallery session of an upcoming board meeting.

New Business

- Lisa Daub initiated a discussion of programs that provide support for family members who care for their elderly relatives, including spouses. The Chair suggested that this issue was best taken up by the Aging Committee, although it was pointed out by Beverly Fettman that in some cases the person being cared for is a disabled person who is not of advanced age.
- It was noted that North Central Bronx Hospital has been winding down its Labor & Delivery Service, in connection with the consolidation of the hospital with Jacobi Medical Center, with the result that service to the West Bronx is much less available.
- The Chair noted recent publicity over the planned development of an 11-story medical building on South Riverdale Avenue (at the former location of DJ Drugs) to house Montefiore-related medical services. The plan will be the subject of an upcoming Land Use Committee meeting, but this Committee should invite a presentation by representatives of the hospital and the developer at an early point in the process.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 pm.

The next meeting will be held in conjunction with the Underage Drinking Forum at **7:30 pm on Monday, November 18, 2013, at the auditorium of In-Tech Academy, MS/HS 368**, located at 2975 Tibbett Avenue, south of West 230th Street.

Prepared by Michael Heller, Vice-Chair
Approved by, Steven Froot, Chair
Health, Hospitals & Social Services Committee