

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX
MINUTES OF THE HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 13, 2011**

PRESENT

Steven Froot
Michael Heller
Maria Khury
Joyce Pilsner
Robert Fanuzzi
Karen Pesce
Beverly Fettman
Sylvia Alexander
Diana Gonzalez
Anderson Torres
Kristin Pederson
Ted Vlavianos
Nydia Rivera
Teanna Arroyo

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair
Committee Vice Chair
CB8
CB8
CB8
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CB8
Leake & Watts
Bon Secours-Schervier Nursing Care Center
Bon Secours Healthy Communities Initiative
American Cancer Society - Bronx Office
Student, Hunter College
Student, Marie Curie High School

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

The Chair introduced Ted Vlavianos, Interim Regional Vice President of the American Cancer Society Bronx Office, and Kristin Pederson, Project Consultant for the Healthy Communities Initiative of the Bon Secours New York Health System/Schervier.

Presentation: American Cancer Society, Bronx Office

Mr. Vlavianos introduced himself as the new Vice President of the American Cancer Society's (ACS) Bronx Region. He has worked for ACS for 10 years, and assumed responsibility for the Bronx Region six months ago. ACS has very high brand recognition, though knowledge of what they do is spotty, except that what they do is very grass-roots. Most of the presentation concerned the "Hilltop Relay for Life" event being conducted by the Fieldston (the host and location), Horace Mann, and Riverdale Country schools. The event will take place May 20th from 6-11 pm, culminating with a luminaria procession. Relay for Life raised \$400,000,000 last year worldwide. It started with a small event and has grown to enormous size. A four minute video was shown about the program.

Mr. Vlavianos explained that the fact that the local event is being organized by school students is atypical. He emphasized that the existence of 11.5 million cancer survivors shows the amazing progress being made in the fight against cancer. What brought him into the fight against cancer was a personal battle against lymphoma. He encouraged the Community Board to form a team to walk in the May 20th event. Various Board members volunteered to put Mr. Vlavianos in contact with organizations that could provide support for the event. Some discussion took place about the status of cancer and how it affects the public. Flyers were distributed.

Presentation: Bon Secours Healthy Communities Initiative

Ms. Pederson is the Project Consultant for the Community Food Survey project now being undertaken by the Bon Secours Healthy Communities Initiative. She explained that the Food Survey will target three of our CB 8 communities - Marble Hill, Kingsbridge and Kingsbridge Heights. The Food Survey is being supported by the Mission Fund out of Bon Secours' corporate office in Baltimore, which is the same source that provides funds for the local area Youth Markets in which the Board has been instrumental.

The first part of the project is a questionnaire about places residents cook, eat and shop, and the objective is to obtain 300 responses in CB 8 and Inwood generally. The questionnaire aspect of the project is ongoing, and can be accessed online at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CFA_CB8_Inwood, on paper or through live interviews. The next step is to conduct a survey of bodegas and other locations within Marble Hill, Kingsbridge and Kingsbridge Heights to gather information about food pricing and what food products are available. The survey will also aim to determine whether community residents are using food stamps or WIC to obtain healthy and affordable foods, and what can be done to improve eating habits among Bronx residents? The project is working closely with Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and Riverdale Neighborhood House, and is holding focus groups there and at Dewitt Clinton High School.

Board vice chair Bob Fanuzzi described long-standing Board support of the project, and stated that the Board should do everything possible to organize participation. Mr. Fanuzzi commented that this review will provide a blueprint for lobbying for good food quality over the next ten years. Committee members discussed other service providers that might want to participate, including local schools and community-based organizations such as the Riverdale Y and senior centers. Mr. Froot suggested that students in local high schools might volunteer to conduct live interviews of people on the street as a community service activity, to assist in obtaining responses to the questionnaire.

The minutes of the March 21, 2011 meeting were considered and approved following the guest presentations.

Chairperson's Report

The Chair reported that between HHSS meetings and between general Board meetings, and less than two weeks before the New York State budget was to be adopted, the Board was made aware of proposed budget cuts and rule changes to the Early Intervention (EI) program funded by the State Department of Health. EI provides services to children under three years old who have developmental disabilities or delays. Because this was a crisis situation, the CB 8 Chair approved a letter drafted by Mr. Froot to be sent on behalf of the Committee to the Governor, the State Health Commissioner, the Assembly Speaker, the Senate Majority Leader, and the chairs of the health committees in both houses of the State legislature expressing concern over the proposed funding cuts. The letter was distributed after the fact to HHSS members.

It was also reported at the last general Board meeting that a \$3 million HRA-funded program called Teen RAPP (Relationship Abuse Protection Program), which is a counseling and training program staffed by social workers to combat domestic violence and bullying among teens, has been entirely cut from the Mayor's proposed NYC budget. Teen RAPP has a presence in CB 8 at Kennedy High School. Joyce Pilsner suggested that the Committee had inadequate information at this time to make a recommendation for a Board resolution regarding continued funding of the program. Mr. Froot stated that the Youth Committee would take up the issue at its next meeting and prepare a resolution for the full Board if warranted.

Follow-up Business

Budget priorities: HHSS vice chair Mike Heller is attempting to arrange for EMS to send a representative to the Committee's next meeting to address ambulance deployment in CB 8, in light of recent reports that a restocking station in Woodlawn at West 233rd Street would soon open and the 50th Precinct restocking station might soon cease operations. The general consensus has previously been to maintain a restocking facility in our community, due to concerns that response times could be adversely affected by the need to restock and decontaminate ambulances farther from the center of CB 8. Sylvia Alexander stated her view that the Board should continue to advocate the construction of a restocking station adjacent to PS 37. Maria Khury also reminded the Committee that the Red Cross is still seeking a local facility at which to base its ambulances, now that they are no longer able to use Lincoln Hospital as a base.

Mr. Heller reported that he had been unable to obtain information from Mosholu Montefiore Community Center as to programs serving CB 8 or other unmet needs that might be suitable for budget requests. Beverly Fettman reported on her discussions with Riverdale Neighborhood House, which indicated it would seek City funding to offset losses in State funding; she is attempting to get a response in writing as to their specific needs. She will continue to try to elicit a response from the Bronx Jewish Community Council (BJCC) as to any program funding requests or other unmet social service needs.

Ms. Pilsner reported that State and Medicaid funding cuts are having an adverse impact upon the services provided by the Riverdale Mental Health Association. A general discussion of the difficult funding climate ensued.

Karen Pesce reported on her research regarding health screening vans that operate out of or serve CB 8. It appears that screening vans tend to operate out of hospitals, and most hospitals would not be eligible for NYC budget requests (hospitals funded by the Health & Hospitals Corporation). It was suggested that Assemblyman Dinowitz' office sometimes arranges for a screening van that provides mammograms, and that follow-up with his office could be helpful.

Urgent Care Centers: Ms. Pilsner reported on her investigation into urgent care centers within or near CB 8. There are several such centers located in the Bronx such as the Bronx East Montefiore Medical Group, which augments services and hours beyond those provided by other Montefiore Medical groups. There is a “DOCS” on Westchester Avenue, apparently owned by one doctor at this point. This DOCS location claims to be part of an urgent care network that covers many specialties. The Committee discussed the purpose and operation of such centers, along with a brief discussion of their role in health care reform.

New Business

A discussion took place about how to publicize the information discussed at Committee meetings in a meaningful way, especially for a committee like HHSS that often performs an informational role (for example, the forum on Health Care Reform legislation), in contrast to certain other committees such as Traffic & Transportation that more often solve specific problems, which naturally receive more public attention. HHSS vice chair Mike Heller said the Committee should find a way to augment its outputs. Mr. Froot commented that this could justify the lengthier meeting minutes that have been a recent HHSS practice, in view of the fact that the minutes are posted on the CB 8 web site, www.nyc.gov/bronxcb8.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Next month's meeting will take place on Monday, May 16, 2011, at the Board office.

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