

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – December 3, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (Chair), Arlene Schulman (Asst. Chair), Domingo Estevez, Wanda Garcia, Andrea Kornbluth, Elizabeth Lehmann, Terriell Peters, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

ABSENT: Juan Mejia, Alyce Smith (excused).

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Richard Allman, Mary Anderson.

GUESTS: Julio Batista, NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Peter Gordon, M.D. and Richard Younge, M.D., Columbia University Medical Center/NYPH; Mya Vazquez, Dominican Women's Development Center; Sarah Deutsch, Washington Heights CORNER Project; Oinyam Lin, Independence House; Doris Giordano, Rose Ann Hermann, Marty Rowland, Henry George School of Social Science.

Arlene Schulman, Assistant Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. The committee members and members of the public introduced themselves.

1. **Discussion on HIV/AIDS in our Community and the Availability of Services** – This discussion is being held in recognition of World AIDS Day (Dec. 1). The four speakers represent the prime providers of HIV/AIDS services in our community. According to the recently issued Community Health Profile, Washington Heights-Inwood has the 11th highest HIV incidence of the 59 community districts in NYC – 48.1 new HIV diagnoses per 100,000 population in 2013.

- Peter Gordon, M.D., Medical Director, Comprehensive HIV Infectious Disease Clinic, New York-Presbyterian Hospital: End of Epidemic Initiative – unprecedented funding to end epidemic by 2020. In San Francisco, prevention, prophylaxis reduced new infections by 75-95%; new resources to engage and retain people with HIV/AIDS them in care. The four WH-I groups are working together in the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program to map WH-I's needs. These organizations are working collectively to end the epidemic. It was recently announced the first time in NYC no babies born with HIV. Rate of new infections will go from 2700/year to 750/year. You can't really transmit HIV if it's undetectable. DSRIP funding from NYPH (\$600,000-700,000) is being disbursed to HIV organizations. Anyone who needs to be seen in the community will be hooked up with a care coordinator that same day if necessary. Demographics are unrecognized: male youth of color, elderly. New app called Heads or Tails, which deals with the risk of HIV, is being used to bring youth in for treatment. At end of the game, players get a \$20 gift card, additional \$10 if they fill out a DOH survey. When they come in to get gift card, the person gets education/prevention info about taking PREP on a daily basis, which is covered by insurance, or access to program that covers it. It's a social media campaign – want it to go viral; 600 people have played it so far. City DOH clinic on 168th Street was closed several years ago. However, as a result of this collaborative, screening for sexually transmitted infections and HIV will be done at the community organizations starting early next year – low threshold access, different sites throughout the community. Mobile vans will be used to cover Inwood and other areas. This will be the first time these services will be so widely available in the community. We can end HIV in Washington Heights-Inwood in five years. Will hire peers and Community Health Workers; mapping exercise to identify needs; First quarter of 2016 will have community health workers at six agencies; in year 2 will look to expand to other agencies such as Community Health Network.
- Terriell Peters, Re-entry Services Program Manager, ASCNYC: Discussed HIV Warriors presentation – a story line. ASC's primary focus is now to address the behavior through several evidence-based interventions and education. Heroin is back, PNP – party and play – with crystal meth increases sexually risky behaviors, affects medication adherence and the lack of HIV disclosure. ASC has always followed the harm reduction model, but now also abstinence; offers food pantry, hot lunches, everyday breakfasts, etc. in conjunction with group and individual counseling, but most of the clients are coming from other boroughs. The Corner Project is helping with outreach. ASC is located at 2036 Amsterdam Ave. (161st St.). Clients can enter office through the back of the building so nobody knows they are going there. Once they get blood stick, they immediately go to primary care and are connected with mental health services. Focus on the prison re-entry population at Rikers Island – institutionalized homosexuality, risky behaviors. He goes there twice a week for outreach. Prisoners don't take medication because of stigma; drug use, unprotected sex common. When they are

released, he picks them up and gives them a cell phone for 4 months, provides them with education and/or gainful employment; six-month follow-up. He personally writes their resumes to engage them; 470 men in the program this year; no collaboration with the men's shelter at the armory run by Project Renewal. Another outreach method: peer educators go to bars to urge people to come in to get tested. ASC helps 19-29-year-olds, teenagers with parental consent.

- Mya Vazquez, Outreach Specialist, Health Promotion Program, Dominican Women's Development Center: DWDC offers programs around HIV prevention, domestic violence, Healthy Family Program; two childcare centers. Healthy programs – they go into the schools and target adolescents. Hookah campaign – harm reduction: educate community how to smoke it healthier with own mouthpieces to avoid bodily fluids and HIV/AIDS, use factual, YouTube videos (invited to come back to talk about hookahs); two community health workers support families with diabetes and asthma, affordable health insurance navigator. Group interaction and counseling sessions with high-risk patients; have partnered with Harlem United for HIV testing; expanding to include transgender individuals, not just women's services; mapping right now to find out about need; giving resources to those that engage in risky behaviors.
 - Sarah Deutsch, Associate Director of Outreach & Prevention Services, Washington Heights CORNER Project: Peer-based approach; syringes, homelessness problem – addresses barriers to stigmatized population; transgendered are 50 times more likely to be infected with HIV and are not connected to care. There are 24 syringe programs in NY State; they work closely together as a coalition. CORNER Project has strong relationships with local precincts (not capturing private information – safe assessment; because of confidentiality, they have been able to collect data three times on same individuals, do a longitudinal assessment and develop a health profile on this population. Through peer outreach, employ active injectors to engage their social networks. Strong social network – so they come back. Large number of transgender individuals in community are closeted because they are not accepted, so they go downtown for services and those programs are overburdened.
Mya Vazquez talked about being transgender – there is a history of no resources for transgender and discrimination. There is now a better relationship with the transgender community and new initiatives to foster policies to support a specific group; are schools equipped to deal with transgender issues? There are needs for changing the body, which creates a need for money and becomes a factor in their becoming sex workers. There is a need for a critical mass of people who understand transgender medicine – developing curriculum, recruiting faculty. There is understanding now that our community has always been broader
2. **The Status of the Family Medicine Residency Program** – Dr. Richard Younge, Director, Center for Family and Community Medicine, CUMC: On 10/12/15 CUMC announced that the Family Residency Program would be phased out and then reversed the decision the next day. The residents work at the Farrell Ambulatory Care Network site and at the Allen Hospital. The program is also working with homeless LGBT youth at the Metropolitan Church in the Village. The Family Medicine specialty established a different approach to medicine – the internist looks internally, family medicine doctors look outward into the family, the community context; particularly interested in the environment. There are 18 Family Medicine residents currently at CUMC: 6 in each year of their 3-year training. Importance of how do you collaborate with other programs- community outreach projects. Only a few Family Medicine students are currently in the medical school.
S. Simon: This should be considered an important specialty as a way to encourage students to become doctors in our community and elsewhere in the city. It would be good if more students were recruited into the program.
 3. **Continued discussion regarding City Council bill to reduce the use of carryout bags in retail stores, groceries and supermarkets (Intro. 209)** – After some discussion about the status of the legislation in the City Council, Schulman/Lehmann moved that the resolution be tabled until the Council amends its bill. Passed, 5-0-1.

4. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, reported as follows:
 - The aim of DSRIP is to keep people healthy and out of going to the emergency room.
 - NYPH created a physicians' forum with 250 private doctors in the community to ensure continuity of care for patients.
 - Human Relations conducted a workshop on applying for grants for representatives from 17 community groups – 11/20.
 - Targeted health fairs are held for taxi drivers (September), bodega owners and workers (spring), artists and nannies (West Side and East Harlem).

A. Schulman offered to inform the livery base stations of the taxi drivers'; health fair when they come before the Licensing Committee.
5. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported as follows:
 - Rehab suite on third floor opening in January.
 - Starting renovation of social hall and lobby in February. Should be completed in June.
 - Mark Kator, President/CEO since 1998, announced that he plans to retire at the end of 2016.
 - HIV has been found among the 63 people (mostly women) participating in the adult day care program. Husbands use Viagra, don't even know they have HIV and spread disease to wives.
6. **Old Business** – S. Simon: Street cleanliness ratings improved considerably in October to 87.2%. That was 5.6% better than the September rating (81.6%).

S. Simon: The committee's #1 expense budget priority for FY 17 was ranked #1 by the full board – "Expand mental health services in our community, especially for youth and older adults." He also gave the board's rankings for the committee's other expense and capital priorities.

S. Simon: NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation reports that the Remedial Investigation field work at the brownfield at 2420-2430 Amsterdam Ave. has been pushed back to February because the owner needs to acquire additional financing for the project, which is anticipated to begin in the first quarter of 2016.

A. Schulman: we should ask a representative from CM Rodriguez's office to come to the January meeting to discuss the legislation on hookahs.

E. Lehmann: we should invite Con Edison to give us an update on its plan to expand natural gas service in "area growth zones" in the community.

B. Hall: Con Ed postponed the connection for River Terrace and cluster of other buildings in the area where she lives.

E. Lehmann: The New Yorker magazine ran an article about Dr. Robert Corrigan and the Rodent Control Academy he conducts for the Health Department.
7. **New Business** – S. Simon distributed fact sheets on the Mayor's new program to expand mental health services throughout the city, "ThriveNYC: A Mental Health Roadmap for All." It's a possible agenda topic for January.

R. Allman reported on his role as chair of the new CB 12 LGBTQ task force, which will focus on delivering services in the community. He is continuing to discuss the task force with CB 12 members and others in the community and will give an initial report at the December general meeting. Praised earlier presentations on HIV/AIDS services.

A. Schulman: NYPH hosting a community breakfast at the Allen Hospital with a tour of the new spine unit - 12/10.
8. **Announcements** – Armory is conducting a toy drive. A. Kornbluth: has two etchings of streetscapes on exhibit at the Borough President's office downtown until end of January. A. Schulman: has a wreath on exhibit at the Arsenal, the Parks Department's HQ. It includes a photo of the historic elm tree on St. Nicholas Ave. & W. 163rd St.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Wanda Garcia and Steve Simon