

## HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – November 5, 2015

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steve Simon (Chair), Arlene Schulman (Asst. Chair), Andrea Kornbluth, Elizabeth Lehmann,

**ABSENT:** Wanda Garcia, Juan Mejia, Terriell Peters, Alyce Smith, Jason Tejada, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

**GUESTS:** Julio Batista, Veronica Hlibczuk and Kim Moore, NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Sandra Harris and Stephanie Thompson, Columbia University Medical Center; Jim Little, Upper Manhattan Mental Health Center; Martin Collins; Natalie Espino; Sara Fisher, Friends of Inwood Hill Park; Davina Prabher.

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The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:15 pm. .

1. **Presentation on NY-Presbyterian Hospital's Urgent Care Center** – Veronica Hlibczuk, MD, Medical Director, accompanied by Kim Moore-Steele, R.N., Practice Administrator, gave a Powerpoint presentation and distributed brochures regarding the center, which is part of the Ambulatory Care Network and is located at 21 Audubon Ave. at W. 166<sup>th</sup> St. (212-342-4700), diagonally across the street from the CB 12 office.
  - NYPH is making a major effort to publicize the existence of the center so that people know there is an alternative to going to the emergency room for what are really non-emergency conditions.
  - The UCC is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 7:45 p.m. (last patient seen) and Saturday, 9 a.m. – 6:15 p.m. (last patient seen).
  - There has been a 7% increase in patient volume over last year. In 2014, patient volume was 10, 274. So far in 2015 (Jan.-Oct.), patient volume has been 9,361 – compared to 8,706 in same period last year.
  - Services provided cover minor illnesses and injuries of adult patients of all ages, conditions that do not warrant going to the emergency room. A pediatric program in the same building can handle urgent care needs for children. Average waiting time: 1.2-1.5 hours.
  - The staff includes physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants.
  - Any insurance or lack of insurance is accepted. 20% of patients don't have insurance.
  - Patients without primary care doctors are referred to the other ACN sites.
  - Better signage will be installed, including a new awning and hopefully signage on the building façade. The center will be added to the maps around the campus.
2. **Presentation on ESETT Study** – Stephanie Thompson, Research Coordinator, Dept. of Neurocritical Care, Columbia University Medical Center, gave a Powerpoint presentation concerning the Established Status Epilepticus Treatment Trial (ESETT), distributed brochures and a Community Consultation Survey form.
  - The research trial will be run out of the ER and will start in the next 2-3 months.
  - Status Epilepticus is a seizure or recurrent seizures lasting longer than five minutes without stopping or the patient waking up. A person whose seizure does not stop after receiving a full dose of medicine to make it stop is considered to have Established Status Epilepticus.
  - Purpose of this study is to find out which of three commonly used drugs given in the ER after the first-line medication is safer and more effective. All three drugs are considered effective to some degree. The trial lasts 10 minutes (one dose).
  - It is a four-year study funded by the National Institutes of Health. NYPH/Columbia is one of 39 sites across the nation. Both the Milstein Hospital and the Children's Hospital will be participating.
  - After 300 patients are enrolled, an initial analysis will be done to determine which drug shows the most promise. The target is to enroll 785 patients nationally.
  - Patients are "auto-enrolled." Informed consent not possible because of patient's condition. The Food and Drug Administration allows an Exception from Informed Consent when the person's life is at risk, the best treatment is not known, the study might help the person and it is not possible to get permission.
  - Before researchers may do a study using EFIC, they must provide information about the study to the community and get their feedback.

3. **Request to support application to NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services** – Jim Little, Special Projects Coordinator, Upper Manhattan Mental Health Center, requested CB 12's support for a proposal he plans to submit for funding to establish a Recovery and Resource Center for people in the community with issues and concerns around substance use disorders, which would be located in Washington Heights-Inwood.
- Six centers would be funded around the state. Each would receive \$350,000 annually for several years.
  - It would not be a treatment center, only an information center for people with substance abuse problems and their families seeking places where they can be treated.
  - It would have limited staff, including peer advocates and volunteers, people from the community who have gone through substance abuse treatment.
  - It would rely upon connections with our strong provider network such as the WH-I Council on Aging, Isabella Geriatric Center, Inwood Community Services, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corp., etc.
  - He would look for a storefront but might share space with an existing CBO. The center would be open evenings and Saturdays.

Because of the lack of a quorum and the time factor for submitting the application, S. Simon said he would bring this matter before the Executive Committee.

4. **Continued discussion regarding City Council bill to reduce the use of carryout bags in retail stores, groceries and supermarkets (Intro. 209)** – S. Simon said he thought the committee should review the resolution it passed last month in light of the fact that the sponsors of the bill are considering making changes, particularly lowering the fee from 10 cents to 5 cents. However, because of the lack of a quorum, this matter was tabled to the next meeting.

5. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, reported as follows:
- A successful resume writing and interview skills workshop was held. 30 people attended.
  - A workshop on applying for grants is being held for community groups – 11/20.
  - A community breakfast is being held at the Allen Hospital on 12/10, including a tour of the new "spine hospital." A special unit has been created for three world-renowned spine doctors who came from St. Louis.

6. **Columbia University Medical Center Report** – Sandra Harris, Assistant Vice President, Government & Community Affairs, reported as follows:
- A "topping-off" ceremony will be held for the new School of Nursing building on W. 168<sup>th</sup> St. & Audubon Ave. on 12/3. It should be open by 2017. No plan yet for current building, which includes residences. New building does not have residences.
  - Project Medical Education alumni dinner was held. The alumni include many community leaders.
  - The next research forum will be on mental health, including research findings. CUMC has a collaborative program with the Fort Washington Men's Shelter at the Armory.
  - The Young Doctors program starts 11/13. Medical students visit science classes in local intermediate and high schools to encourage kids to pursue health careers.
  - S-PREP program starts next week: SAT prep, science and technology. 200 students meet on Saturdays over four months; also a summer component. After intensive outreach, 37 students were recruited through CLOTH, Gregorio Luperon H.S. and the George Washington High School campus. The program is run by the College of Physicians & Surgeons' Office of Diversity.
  - New budget approved by Congress has \$80 billion additional funding. NIH funding likely to increase 1%.
  - Dyckman Institute scholarship winners will be coming to the CB 12 general meeting later this month.

7. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported as follows:
- A reception will be held to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adult day care program on 11/12. It is the only such program based on a medical model in northern Manhattan.

- An open house will be held 11/11 for the child day care program, which has 39 children. There are some openings, which is usually not the case.
  - The new short-stay rehab unit will be opening in December. There will now be a total of 93 such beds.
  - Isabella received two allocations from the local Council Members through the Council's Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NNORC) Initiative: \$50,000 for the El Corazon NNORC in the 168<sup>th</sup> Street area and \$60,000 for the River Terrace NNORC in the southern Heights, which is starting up.
8. **Old Business** – S. Simon: the NYC Clean Heat campaign has now achieved total success in our community – the last holdout at 475 W. 186<sup>th</sup> St., has now applied for a permit to convert the boiler to a cleaner fuel.
- Another suicide took place recently at the George Washington Bridge, the 16<sup>th</sup> of the year.
9. **New Business** – S. Simon: The Health Department has published an updated Community Health Profile for Washington Heights-Inwood. He distributed copies to the members and said he was trying to arrange a presentation to the committee in January or February. B. Lehmann suggested it be done at a general meeting of the board, which everyone agreed was a good idea.
- S. Simon: The Mayor announced the Caring Neighborhoods initiative, which will create five new HHC community health centers, expand another six, and support the expansion or creation of eight other community health centers. The plan targets 25 neighborhoods, including Washington Heights-Inwood, to expand healthcare options and increase capacity to serve at least 100,000 new patients. He will try to obtain more information before the next meeting.
- S. Fisher: Each Council Member received \$103,921 in the FY 16 budget to allocate to groups through the Council's NYC Cleanup Initiative, a sizeable increase over last fiscal year. Council Member Rodriguez allocated \$40,000 to Centro Altagracia de Fe y Justicia, \$40,000 to the Doe Fund and \$23,921 to the Dept. of Sanitation. Council Member Levine allocated \$60,000 to the Association of Community Employment Programs for the Homeless, \$20,921 to the Horticultural Society of New York and \$23,000 to the Dept. of Sanitation. She also reported on the Participatory Budgeting process, in which some Council Members, including both Rodriguez and Levine, have set aside \$1 million in their discretionary capital budgets to be allocated by their constituents in a public vote. She said the deadline for submitting proposals for the 10<sup>th</sup> Council District is 11/10. She urged the committee to look into the status of the two pending Council bills on the sale and use of hookahs. She also offered to report to the committee at a future meeting about her work on water testing.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Simon