

## HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – April 7, 2016

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steve Simon (Chair), Mitchell Glenn (Asst. Chair), Andrea Kornbluth, Elizabeth Lehmann, Javier Trejo, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

**ABSENT:** Domingo Estevez, Wanda Garcia, Terriell Peters, Alyce Smith.

**OTHER BOARD MEMBERS:** Mary Anderson

**GUESTS:** Ricky Wong, NYC Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene; Luigi Fulinello, Michael Scher and Philip Santora, NY Road Runners; Julio Batista, NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Sandra Harris, Columbia University Medical Center; Sara Fisher; Paolo Turchiof; Janice Hom, Xiao Zheng, Nick Reir and Kristi Yu, students from Hunter/Bellevue School of Nursing.

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S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.

**1. Presentation on the Community Health Profile for Washington Heights-Inwood --** Ricky Wong, Director of Community Affairs, NYC Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), said the last report was issued in 2006 but the department hopes to update them every 3-4 years. DOHMH created the profiles for all 59 community districts so that the data could be used by community groups, policymakers, researchers and others to advocate for their neighborhoods, shape policies and design locally-based initiatives. There is no biological reason for inequities in health outcomes; the primary reason is income inequality, combined with a history of racial residential segregation. Here are some highlights from the 2015 Profile for Washington Heights-Inwood:

- Population (2013 Census Bureau estimate); 195,302 – 71% Hispanic, 17% White, 7% Black, 3% Asian, 1% Other. 48% foreign-born; 39% have limited English proficiency.
- High proportion are between 25-44 years old, making up one-third of the population. 19% are under 17 years of age; 11% are between 18-24 years old; 25% are between 45-64 years old; 13% are 65 or older.
- 73% reported their own health as “excellent,” “very good” or “good.” The citywide rate was 78%.
- Average life expectancy is 83.2 years – in the top quarter of communities citywide, more than five years better than Central and East Harlem, and approximately three years better than Kingsbridge – Riverdale.
- We rank 8<sup>th</sup> in the city in % of rental apartments with at least one maintenance defect (75%)
- Levels of PM 2.5, the most harmful air pollutant, are better than rest of Manhattan but worse than citywide.
- Supermarket access (square footage per 100 people) is much lower than Manhattan and citywide figures.
- 36% of adults have college degrees, but a high percentage (30%) have not completed high school.
- 27% live below the federal poverty level, above the citywide average (21%).
- 16% of those 16 and older are unemployed, also above the citywide average (11%).
- 54% of residents pay more than 30% of monthly income on rent, slightly above citywide average (51%).
- Assuming that the death rates from the five neighborhoods with the highest incomes are achievable here, it is estimated that 10% of deaths could have been averted.
- The pre-term birth rate (8.5%) is slightly below the citywide average (9.0%).
- The teen birth rate (28.8 per 1,000 girls ages 15-18) is above the citywide average (23.6).
- The jail incarceration rate (117 per 100,000 persons ages 16 and older) is higher than the citywide rate (93).
- The injury assault hospitalization rate (48 per 100,000 population) is lower than the citywide rate (64).
- We have one of the lowest percentages of current smokers (12%) -- #55 out of 59 community districts.
- Adults are more likely to consume sugary drinks and less likely to get physical activity than adults in NYC's best-performing districts.
- The obesity rate (22%) is slightly under the citywide rate (24%) but higher than Manhattan (16%).
- The diabetes rate (10%) is the same as NYC overall but higher than Manhattan (7%).
- The drug-related hospitalization rate (779 per 100,000 adults) is lower than the rates in Manhattan (1,025) and NYC (907).
- One in five adults had no health insurance at the time of the survey prior to 2014. (With implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the citywide figure decreased from 20% to 14%. A similar decrease is expected here.) One in six goes without needed medical care, the fourth-highest rate in the city.
- Teenage girls are more likely to receive the full HPV vaccine series than girls citywide (59% vs. 43%).
- Adults here are more likely to get tested for HIV than adults citywide (71% vs. 62%).
- We rank 11<sup>th</sup> in the rate of new HIV diagnoses (48.1 per 100,000 population). Citywide rate is 30.4.

- The rate of adult psychiatric hospitalizations (497 per 100,000 population) is lower than the Manhattan average (755) and the overall NYC rate (684).
- The rate of stroke hospitalizations (329 per 100,000 population) is higher than the Manhattan (264) and citywide (319) rates.
- The rate of asthma hospitalizations among children ages 5-14 (28 per 100,000) is lower than the Manhattan (33) and citywide (36) rates.
- The rate of avoidable asthma hospitalizations per 100,000 adults (218) is higher than Manhattan (196) but lower than the citywide rate (249).
- The rate of avoidable adult diabetes hospitalizations (334 per 100,000) is higher than Manhattan (233) and citywide (312) rates.
- The top causes of death, as for most New Yorkers, are heart disease and cancer. The death rate for Alzheimer's disease is more than double the rate for NYC overall – it is the fourth leading cause of death here, the 11<sup>th</sup> citywide. The death rate for hypertension is also higher than NYC overall.
- The infant mortality rate (3.6 per 1,000 live births) is higher than Manhattan (3.4) and more than three times the rate on the Upper East Side (1.0). It is lower than NYC overall (4.7).
- The premature mortality rate (death before the age of 65) is 139.2 per 100,000 population, which is better than Manhattan (152.7) and NYC overall (198.4).

The Community Health Profiles are available for download on the DOHMH website. If you have other questions about health in NYC, you may be able to find answers using EpiQuery or the Environment and Health Data Portal, DOHMH's online data tools.

**2. Programs offered by NY Road Runners in our community --** Luigi Fulinello, Community Liaison, NY Road Runners, reported as follows:

- NY Road Runners has 60,000 members, largest running organization in the country. Sponsors the annual Washington Heights Salsa, Blues & Shamrocks 5K Run (formerly sponsored by Coogan's) between the Fort Washington Armory and Fort Tryon Park in March.
- Mighty Milers -- free youth running program for kids of all fitness levels from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Last year, more than 157,000 youth participated in this program, and together, they ran 5.3 million miles. Program reopening May 1 for the 2016-17 school year. There are 10 Mighty Milers sites in our district; also seven Young Runners sites. Interested in expanding to more schools and NYCHA locations.
- Many of the kids use the Armory Track and Field Center. He said he would get us details on the numbers.
- The committee urged him to work with George Washington H.S. to encourage kids to use the outdoor track there. Javier Trejo, principal of the High School for Health Careers and Sciences and committee member, said he tried to organize a track club at the school before and would like to work with the NY Road Runners to try again.
- NYRR Striders -- free adult walking program for seniors and fitness walkers. Currently in approximately 30 locations in NYC. Interested in expanding to new senior centers, community centers or other appropriate locations. Betty Lehmann suggested linking with Isabella's walking program, and he agreed to follow up.
- Michael Scher spoke about Open Run -- free community-based walking and running program currently in 8 parks. First Manhattan location is Inwood Hill Park (2.7 mile course). Saturday mornings at 9am. Started last week – turnout (66 people, various age groups) was tremendous. Doing more outreach; want to reach people east of Broadway.

**3. NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report –** Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, reported as follows:

- The hospital would be willing to work with GWHS to encourage kids to run.
- Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital hosted DOT Safety Theater on 3/31. 400 students from local schools attended.
- Census at the emergency room continues to be high. Hospital is still planning an educational campaign about finding a primary care doctor and using the Urgicare Center, 21 Audubon Ave., instead of the ER. Plan to increase the hours there. It's currently open weekdays 8 a.m. - 7:45 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. – 6:15 p.m. People are taken care of within two hours. The center is underutilized; may have to move eventually. Problem with the property owner, who won't allow signage to be hung from building.

4. **Columbia University Medical Center Report** – Sandra Harris, Assistant Vice President, Government & Community Affairs, left information on the following:
  - Lung Health Awareness Day – April 9 @ the Faculty Club
  - Baker Field summer camp scholarships – applications will be accepted for 33 slots from April 18 – May 13. Lottery will be held May 20. Neighborhood children residing in zip codes 10032, 10033, 10034 and 10040 are eligible.
  
5. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported as follows:
  - Open house for Isabella House – apartments with services for those over 62 years of age – on April 9.
  - WHICOA holding annual seminar on Substance Abuse and Older Adults
  - Isabella’s Home Care program, 5073 Broadway, is looking for Home Health Aides – field is growing rapidly.
  - Borough President Brewer’s office published an excellent Senior Resources guide.
  
6. **Old Business** -- S. Simon: Our Street Cleanliness ratings improved dramatically in March (93.5%) after dropping down to 75% in February. The three northern sectors were all above 90% -- MN 122 (from W. 171<sup>st</sup> Street to Fort Tryon Park west of Fort Washington Ave. and up to W. 183<sup>rd</sup> St. on the east side) earned a 98% rating. Starting this month we will also look at our sidewalk cleanliness ratings. In March, we had a 98.6% rating, with three out of four sectors rated at 100%.  
B. Hall: Smoking should not be allowed at bus stop shelters. S. Simon promised to check if it is already prohibited.
  
7. **New Business** – S. Fisher suggested that we invite the groups funded through the City Council’s NYC Clean Initiative to make presentations about their activities. She also said we should look into plans being developed for long-term control of Combined Sewer Outflows.
  
8. **Announcements** – S. Fisher: A rally is being held at City Hall in support of the plastic bags legislation on 4/13. Various activities are planned for Earth Day weekend in Inwood Hill Park. The Flint, Michigan water crisis is being discussed at the WEACT meeting this Saturday. Riverkeeper is holding its 5<sup>th</sup> annual River Sweep on 5/7, including a cleanup at the North Cove.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon