

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – December 6, 2018

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (Chair), Daryl Cochrane (Asst. Chair), Richard Allman, Tanya Bonner, Sara Fisher, Danielle Jettoo, Elizabeth Lehmann, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

BOARD MEMBER PRESENT: Richard Lewis

GUESTS: Peter Gordon, M.D., Columbia University Medical Center/NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Julio Batista, NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Matthew Lesieur, iHealth; Isaiah Jenkins, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs; Wendy Feinstein.

S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m. He introduced the members of the committee and the guests who were present.

1. Annual report on the impact of HIV/AIDS in our community in recognition of World AIDS Day

Peter Gordon, M.D., Medical Director, Comprehensive HIV Infectious Disease Clinic, Columbia University Medical Center/New York-Presbyterian Hospital, gave the following report:

- There have been remarkable achievements in dealing with HIV/AIDS but much left to accomplish
- Last time he spoke to the committee in 2015 about the state's End to AIDS by 2020 initiative
- Both the State and City Health Departments have provided substantial funding for HIV/AIDS, including a lot of grant dollars to New York-Presbyterian Hospital
- NY has been the center of the epidemic – 1 out of 6 diagnosed with HIV/AIDS were in NY State
- Majority of new cases diagnosed in NYC are in three areas: north Manhattan/Bronx, Brooklyn and Chelsea
- 40% of people with HIV who have fallen out of care live in the CB 12 area and vicinity
- When people at risk of getting HIV go to the ER, they are no longer given a card for a future appointment. They are seen right away and given medication.
- 1600 people have come to his clinic for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) drugs to prevent HIV in just 3 years, 2200 people have been treated overall. Clinic is located in the Harkness and Vanderbilt buildings.
- 2nd largest HIV prevention program in the city
- In NYC, anyone 13 years old and over is encouraged to take HIV test
- The State and City campaigns have been very effective in reducing the number of people who don't know their HIV status from 25% to 6% in just a few years
- The City's U=U (Undetectable=Untransmittable) advertising campaign has had a dramatic effect in destigmatizing HIV
- It's a lot easier to treat HIV than diabetes or heart disease
- On 12/1, World AIDS Day, Gov. Cuomo announced record low numbers of people diagnosed with HIV
- NYP has a wide array of programs for HIV/AIDS, regardless of ability to pay and immigration status, principally through the Ambulatory Care Network.
- NYP is a NYC PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) Center of Excellence for providing same-day PEP service. It is also an Adolescent Center of Excellence.
- NYP is still working with the REACH Collaborative to provide HIV/AIDS services in the community through five CBOs: Washington Heights Corner Project, Dominican Women's Development Center, Alliance for Positive Change, Argus, Village Care. Funding provided by the state through the DSRIP program is running out. Hope to get funding through another program.
- This community also has a problem with opioid disorders. The hospital has treated 4 individuals with infections in their heart valves because of injecting drugs. There have been more complications from drug use in the last 20 years. There is a desperate need for substance abuse treatment options.

S. Fisher: Men of color have a growing % of HIV infection

P. Gordon: African-American males have a 1 in 4 chance of becoming HIV+. The state has a program for providing access to drugs. NYP works with pharmaceutical companies to provide drugs for free. Truvada is offered for free nationwide to people in need. NYP also offers HEP-C and HEP-CAP diagnosis and treatment free of charge.

D. Cochrane: Who are the 6% who are unaware of their status?

P. Gordon: People who have recently acquired the infection, people older than 55 or 60, young men of color who have sex with men, women who had relationships with someone 15-20 years ago. We advocate repeated screening. The law requires that doctors offer HIV and HEP testing. There has been a dramatic increase in syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases in the last year.

R. Lewis: asked him to provide posters and flyers that could be distributed by CB 12

S. Simon: Has there been any progress in finding a cure?

P. Gordon: Only one person has been cured to date. It should happen in our lifetimes.

D. Cochrane: According to DOH statistics, over 50% of people living with HIV in our area are 55+ years old.

Matthew Leseur, Executive Director, iHealth, then gave the following report:

- iHealth is a new collaboration of groups that do care coordination in the field
- The long-term effects of being on anti-viral drugs need to be considered. While we're living a lot longer, my health condition will be more challenging.
- Kidney and bone density issues developed from taking Atripla, one of the first HIV drugs, a combination of three drugs. He stopped taking it three years ago.
- People over 60 are entirely reliant upon the service delivery system. They are a lot more isolated, don't necessarily have friends and family. Depression rates are much higher.
- Fiscal impact when they age into Medicare – huge cost burden for drugs. Medicare has to be reformed for people who have chronic diseases.
- A number of specialists who treat people with HIV are retiring. Future challenge to replace these doctors.
- With the new State Legislature, hope is for more funding to deal with the 6% who don't know their HIV status.

2. NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, gave the following report:

- The Nursing team is leading a clothing drive – coats, gloves, socks, etc. – throughout the Medical Center. Will be renting a small truck to deliver donated clothes to various community groups.
- NYPH reach an agreement with Anthem Health (Blue Cross/Blue Shield), whose contract expires 12/31. They wanted to cut \$200 million from reimbursements provided to the NYP system. Affects 200,000+ patients.
- Working with George Washington High School of Health Careers to convert two classrooms to simulated hospital rooms.
- Distributed copies of the hospital's Charity Care Policy Summary and offered to have someone from Financial Services speak on this topic at a future meeting

S. Fisher requested utilization and source of pay data for psych units in the other hospitals in the NYPH system. She repeated the committee's request that the hospital provide is with a copy of the Certificate of Need (CON) application submitted to the state regarding its plan to close the psych unit at the Allen Hospital.

J. Batista: The hospital is not willing to provide the CON application but as stated before would take the committee on a tour of the Allen Hospital.

S. Simon: He wants the committee to go on the tour but only after reading the application to see how it was characterized by the hospital and its closing justified. He will try to obtain it by other means.

3. Trump Administration Plan to Change "Public Charge" Rule – Isaiah Jenkins, Neighborhood Organizer, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), read a statement regarding the Trump Administration's draft "regulation on 'public charges' that has the potential to significantly harm immigrants and low-income families across the country, including here in New York. The regulation would expand a provision of immigration law known as 'public charge' and would enable the Department of Homeland Security to increase denials of entry/green cards based on its assessment that a person will become dependent on the government for subsistence in the future. If the Trump Administration's draft regulation went into effect, it could dramatically increase the number of immigrants who could be denied a request to change their status because they have used public benefits in the past. The City believes that this could cause a chilling effect among immigrants, dissuading many from utilizing vital public benefits, such as preventive health care services. This is only a draft proposal, and the City will fight to prevent this rule from ever going into effect..." He said there is a lot of misinformation about this proposal: "even legal residents are dropping out of programs."

T. Bonner: This affects seniors, the disabled, people with medical conditions, the uninsured.

I. Jenkins suggested that CB 12 could work with the MOIA to hold a Know Your Rights forum to counter the misinformation. The committee members agreed this would be a good idea in conjunction with community groups.

4. Isabella Geriatric Center Report – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, tabled her report until the next meeting.

5. Old Business – S. Simon reported on the following:

- Brownfield cleanup at 2420 Amsterdam Ave. has not been completed, according to the State Dept. of Environmental Conservation, which sent him the following email: “The [Brownfield Cleanup Program] project has recently resumed excavation, and we are several months away from receiving a final report. We should get a better understanding of the condition of adjacent soils in the next couple months.”

W. Feinstein asked about the status of the cleanup at 4650 Broadway.

S. Simon said we are still waiting for the draft remedial work plan, which will be reviewed by the committee. He said he'll check to see if the Langan engineering firm is still working on this plan now that there is a new owner.

- Street and Sidewalk Cleanliness Ratings: The rating for acceptably clean streets in our district for October were not available on the website.
- There were 236 service requests for DEP from WH-I residents in November. The most frequent ones were as follows: Noise: Construction Before/After Hours (46), Lead Kit Requests (18) and Hydrant Running (16).
- DDC provided a written status report on its four current projects in our district: installation of sewer/water main in Inwood, water main/fire hydrant/water valve replacements on Haven Avenue, W. 169th Street to W. 172nd Street, installation of gas main on Wadsworth Avenue between W. 183rd Street and W. 190th Street and pedestrian safety project at the Broadway/Nagle/Bennett/Hillside Avenues intersection.

S. Fisher: The SLA pulled the liquor license for La Marina as of 12/5 as an “emergency suspension” and is looking to revoke it permanently.

6. New Business – The committee discussed ideas for possible changes in NYC’s “constitution” that could be proposed by CB 12 to the 2019 City Council Charter Revision Commission. S. Simon suggested a procedure for selecting consultants who prepare Environmental Impact Statements for development projects to assure that they have some degree of independence from the developers. The committee members supported the idea.

7. Next Meeting – The committee members agreed to meet one week later in January on Jan. 10 because at least two members will be away on Jan. 3.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon.