

## HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – January 18, 2018

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

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:** Andrea Kornbluth (excused).

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Wayne Benjamin, Osi Kaminer.

**GUESTS:** Lauren Xavier, Project Renewal, Fort Washington Men's Shelter; State Senator Marisol Alcantara; Paul Dunphey, Warren Ng, M.D., Anne Sperling, Julio Batista, NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Alex Spyropoulos, Congressman Espaillat's office; Lela Brooks, Anthony Ciampa, James Ferris, Theo Figurasin, Mildred Johnson, Nora Murphy, all members of the N.Y.S. Nurses Assn.; Samantha Cinnick, WHIN Food Council, Catarina Rivera, City Harvest/WHIN Food Council, Michael Hano.

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S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. and introduced the committee members who were present. He noted that this meeting was rescheduled for today because of the snowstorm on Jan. 4, the original meeting date.

### 1. **Presentation regarding medical and mental health services provided at the Fort Washington Men's Shelter** – Lauren Xavier, Clinical Director, Project Renewal, stated as follows:

- The Fort Washington Men's Shelter is a 200-bed MICA (Mentally Ill / Chemical Addiction) shelter. 3,000 men were serviced last year, including people from out-of-state. Average length of stay is 14 months.
- Everyone has a right to shelter in NYC.
- Clients are referred here from one of the assessment shelters, Bellevue or Bedford-Atlantic (Brooklyn).
- They are first oriented to the rules of the shelter and the community.
- If someone doesn't come back at night, we fill the bed.
- The shelter has 15 case managers and supervisors; housing caseworkers; medical (1 part-time doctor), dental, vision and psychiatric staff (2 full-time psychiatrists). Psychiatrists see clients once every 6 months.
- Clients are referred to mental health services elsewhere. If they don't attend, they get escorted. We follow up to make sure they keep appointments.
- They must see case managers once every two weeks to review their personal goals in moving "toward an independent life."
- Clients are given occupational therapy, computer training. Musical instruments are available for them to use.
- There is a mock apartment so they can be shown what it's like to live on your own.
- In response to a question about whether the shelter makes sure that the clients take prescribed medication, she said no one can force them to take medication.

S. Fisher: How many previously have been on Riker's Island at some point? A: 75%

- Homeless Services conducts regular interviews to determine whether clients can be placed in supportive housing. Subsidy programs are utilized.
- 90-100 people are placed in different types of permanent housing each year.
- The shelter emphasizes that we need to get you your own home. You can't stay here (indefinitely).
- We'll swap residents with other shelters to make them less comfortable.
- We don't get a lot of medically unstable or elderly clients.
- We see a lot of improvement with a lot of the residents.
- There are both DHS peace officers and private security in the building.
- Project Renewal staff "do a lap around the neighborhood four times a day" to check on any clients who may be involved in "aggressive panhandling."

J. Batista: the NYP nursing staff at the Milstein building did a clothing drive to collect business suits for homeless men and women to help them look for jobs.

### 2. **State Senator Marisol Alcantara** spoke next. She said she came to the meeting to show concern for the planned closing of mental health services at NYP's Allen Hospital, especially in light of the high rate of suicides among Latina girls. She said she is planning to meet with NYP officials and hopes to come up with a resolution of this matter. In response to a question from S. Simon regarding an item in her newsletter announcing that she had secured a \$400,000 state grant for Comunilife, an organization that prevents suicides by Latina girls, she said the group has started working in 10 schools in her district.

**3. Presentation regarding changes planned for NY-Presbyterian's Allen Hospital – Paul Dunphey, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, NYP/Allen, stated as follows:**

- There are 196 beds at the Allen Hospital. 12,000 in-patients were seen last year, 48,000 in the Emergency Room, 2100 babies are delivered each year.
- The hospital is ranked highly with 3½ - 4 stars by the federal Center for Medicaid & Medicare Services.
- The delivery unit is the highest scoring unit.
- The plan is to bring together the labor/delivery unit, now on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, and the post-partum unit, now on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, and create a state-of-the-art maternity unit on one floor.
- Operating rooms would be added on the first floor, an additional medical/surgery unit (18-20 beds).
- Also add radiology. Now have to send patients to Milstein for radiology.
- 30 in-patient psychiatric beds would be decertified.
- The Certificate of Need application was submitted to the state before the end of December.
- No layoffs, no effect on existing staff. Psych staff would be placed in other NYP jobs.
- There would be an overall staff increase to serve the added beds.
- Allen would still have psychiatric consultation services 24/7. Also at Milstein.
- 600 patients a year use the psych beds at Allen. The usual length of stay is 15 days. The vast majority (close to 90%) go home. 46% of the in-patients come from Washington Heights-Inwood. Others are from elsewhere in Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, etc.
- There would be a net reduction in the number of psych beds in the NYP system. Currently, there are 500 such beds, including 24 at Milstein, 25-30 at the Cornell campus, other beds at Westchester, Gracie Square, Brooklyn Methodist, etc. There is capacity to absorb 2-3 patients per day now being admitted at Allen. They would be more appropriately placed.
- Free transportation will be provided to patients' families to Westchester and Gracie Square.

J. Batista: Psych patients who go to the ER at Allen are not necessarily admitted there, and only adult patients are admitted there.

Warren Ng, M.D., Medical Director, Outpatient Services, Behavioral Health, NYP, stated as follows:

- He has been as a child/adolescent psychiatrist for 20 years and also cares for adult out-patients at the 168<sup>th</sup> Street campus.
- In 2016-17, NYP has expanded access to and quality of out-patient psychiatric care. Volume increased by 6%. 24,000 visits by 717 individual adult patients, and more than 29,000 visits by 1940 children. The number of psych patients seen in the primary care clinics increased by 24% (total of 1216 patients). 400 children received services at the school-based health clinics.
- NYP also operates a home-based mental health program with 4 clinicians, treating people in their homes.
- Psych patients who go to the ER at Allen are sent to the CPEP (Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program) unit in the ER at 168<sup>th</sup> Street to be evaluated.
- 75% of the psych patients at Allen have mood/bipolar disorders, major depression, schizophrenia. 25% have MICA issues.
- There are also 21 beds at NY.S. Psychiatric Institute.

S. Simon pointed out that when the Allen Hospital (then the Allen Pavilion) opened about 30 years ago, it had 300 beds. He asked what happened to the 104 beds that are no longer there and whether there is room at Allen to accommodate the 30 psych beds as well as the additional maternity and medical/surgical beds. He also asked whether it makes sense to shuttle patients in mental distress from Allen to the CPEP unit at 168<sup>th</sup> Street and back again, and whether it would be better to have the 30 psych beds at 168<sup>th</sup> Street so patients could be admitted more quickly and without the added trip back to Allen. In addition, he suggested that local residents be given preference for the beds at Milstein if the unit at Allen is closed.

S. Fisher: How many mental health beds did NYP have 10 years ago?

A. Ciampa: The psych beds at Allen are typically full.

L. Brooks: Although there won't be layoffs, 25 nurses certified in psychiatric care would no longer be able to use their skills and perform the work they were trained to do.

P. Dunphey: There are hundreds of nursing vacancies. 50+ staff would be reassigned.

4. **Impact of Drastic Increase in Flu Cases on the NYP Emergency Rooms** – Anne Sperling, Vice President, Government & Community Affairs, NYP, distributed a press release issued today by Governor Cuomo announcing a “drastic rise in influenza across New York State” and stated as follows:
  - The hospital’s ER has been experiencing crowding because of the flu epidemic; there has been a large increase in the number of cases.
  - Stay in touch with us if there are problems and your experience in the RER is not up to par.
  - Every state except Hawaii has experienced a surge in cases. This is the worst flu season since 2004.
  - The effectiveness of the flu vaccine is only 10%, but people should still get it.
5. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, reported as follows:
  - Three Kings Day celebration was held 1/6. The hospital hosted 500 kids. Each one got a gift. Also gave toys to the drop-in center operated by the Dominican Women’s Development Center at Holyrood Church.
  - The nurses conducted a coat drive and collected 1,000 coats that were distributed in the community and donated to the Bowery Mission.
  - A Healthy Heart and Nutrition program will be held at the Allen Hospital on 2/28.

S. Simon commended the hospital for reaching an agreement on a lease renewal with Coogan’s Restaurant so that it can remain in business and serve the community.
6. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported:
  - Isabella is under new management (MJHS) as of 1/1. The new president and the administrator will attend the CB 12 general meeting next week. Services, such as hospice care, are being added.
7. **Old Business** – S. Simon reported on the following:
  - Street and Sidewalk Cleanliness Ratings: The rating for acceptably clean streets in our district for November was 94.4%. Sidewalks were rated as 97.9% acceptably clean.
  - DEP service requests from CD 12 residents: There were 149 requests in December. The top requests were as follows: Construction Noise Before/After Hours (20), Lead Kit Requests (18), Hydrant Leaking (14) and Hydrant Running (13).
8. **New Business** – Inwood Rezoning Plan: There was a brief discussion regarding the fact that the committee would have its initial review of the plan at the February meeting. The plan was certified for ULURP by City Planning on Jan. 16 and CB 12’s 60-day review period begins on Jan. 25.
9. **Announcements** – S. Fisher: 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Earth Day will be held in Inwood Hill Park on 4/22 with the theme, End Plastic Pollution, including a fashion show featuring recycled materials.  
S. Cinnick: WHIN Food Council is holding two events – general meeting on 1/25 at the Hammer Health Sciences Building and a pot luck dinner on 2/6 at Our Savior’s Atonement Church. The WHIN Food Council would like to give regular monthly reports at these committee meetings and be listed on the agendas.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon.