

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – November 7, 2019

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (Chair), Tanya Bonner, Katherine Diaz, Sara Fisher, Elizabeth Lehmann, Ayisha Ogilvie, Rosy Perez.

OTHER BOARD MEMBER PRESENT: Mary Anderson

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Francisco Alvarez, Daryl Cochrane, Jay Mazur (Excused), Beatrice Hall (Public Member, Excused).

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: Julio Batista, New York-Presbyterian Hospital; Sandra Harris, Columbia University Irving Medical Center; Amy Slattery, Office of NYC Council Member Mark Levine; Diane Barrett, Continuing Care Leadership Coalition; Leon Bell, Anna Longo, Shanna Murphy and Odethy Tineo, all from NYS Nurses Assn.; Jorge Benitez, Richard Habersham, Leandra Wein.

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m.

1. New York-Presbyterian Hospital Report – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, reported the following:

- NYP administered annual flu shots to 100 community residents at Hebrew Tabernacle in October.
- A White Coat ceremony was held for the 15 Lang Scholars, 6th -12th grade students who spend every weekend at NYP learning about the various sciences. 113 Lang Scholars have graduated since 2003 – 97% of whom go on to college. 15 Lang Scholar graduates now work full-time at NYP.
- 100 6th graders from the Community Health Academy of the Heights were given a tour of various departments at the hospital. The students will be invited back to shadow nurses, social workers and other professionals as they go about their work during the day.
- The Medical Center Neighborhood Fund provided grants ranging from \$500 to \$3,000 to 45 community organizations this year. The TAPI Award – in honor of the program's founder - was presented to community resident, Jeanlee Poggi, for her intergenerational work with the 181st Street Beautification Project.
- The 33rd Precinct Community Council and NYP held their first breast cancer awareness event on October 26.
- About 100 clergy attended the recent Clergy Summit at NYP on homelessness. NYP and the clergy will work together to counter this rising problem.
- The nursing staff throughout NYP is hosting a coat drive for the homeless from November 20 through December 16.
- There is no update at this time concerning the Allen Hospital and the planned closing of 30 psych beds.

2. Isabella Geriatric Center Report – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing and Community Relations, reported the following:

- Isabella held its 15th Annual Health Fair on Friday, October 11. 56 community organizations had information tables and provided screenings. Mary Anderson, Chair of the Aging Committee of CB 12, hosted one table. About 300 community residents attended.
- The Washington Heights & Inwood Council on Aging (WHICOA) is hosting a conference on November 14 at Isabella. The topic is "Volunteering: Psychological, Emotional and Social Benefits." All are invited to attend.
- On Friday, Local 1199 Health Education Project (HEP) and Isabella hosted a press conference regarding planned budget cuts that will impact all facilities in NYS that receive Medicaid funding. Isabella will lose \$5 million. A lawsuit supported by various provider associations has been filed seeking an injunction since the cuts statewide would be devastating.

3. Columbia University Irving Medical Center Report – Sandra Harris, Assistant Vice President, Government & Community Affairs, reported the following:

- In October, CUIMC held a "Welcome Haven Plaza" event that included the unveiling of the bollard project, with art work done by Emily Perez of NOMAA.
- The Dyckman Institute Scholars will be presented at the next CB 12 general meeting.
- CUIMC will continue to host its quarterly Community Research Forums and the next one will be "Healthy Babies, Healthy Mothers" at the Russ Berrie Medical Science Pavilion on November 14.
- CUIMC is helping to celebrate "The Year of Water" with an exhibit and films at the Lenfest Center for the Arts on West 125th Street.
- The American Public Health Conference this year will focus on the social determinants on health.

- CUIMC will announce details soon about upcoming efforts by the Mailman School of Public Health and will invite the community to participate in various activities. S. Simon asked that a representative of the school make a presentation at a future meeting of the committee.
- The Velocity Race was held in October to raise funds to fight cancer.
- CUIMC is participating with Fresh Youth Initiatives to run an annual food drive from Nov. 6 – Dec. 4.

4. Discussion on pending City Council bill to prohibit the sale of flavored electronic cigarettes – Amy Slattery, Director of Budget & Legislation, Office of NYC Council Member Mark Levine reported the following:

- Councilman Levine introduced a bill – Intro 1362 – a year ago to ban the sale of flavored electronic cigarettes, which entice youth to smoke.
- The American Cancer Society and others support the legislation. The bill was heard in the Council's Committee on Health in January and is expected to come up for a vote in the Council on November 26.
- A motion was made by Sally Fisher and seconded by Betty Lehmann to recommend that CB 12 approve a resolution in support of this proposed legislation. The motion was passed by the following vote:

Committee Members: 6 -0-0-0

Other Board Members: 1-0-0-0

Members of the Public: 9-0-0-0

The resolution was referred to the Executive Committee for consideration at its November 18 meeting since the bill will be considered by the Council on the same day as the General Meeting.

5. Discussion on pending state legislation "Safe Staffing for Hospital Care Act"

Diane Barrett, Director of Government & Public Affairs, Continuing Care Leadership Coalition (CCLC), made the following points:

- CCLC represents not-for-profit providers of long-term care in the Greater New York area.
- The subject of safe staffing has been a focus in New York State in recent years. Legislation to address staffing ratios has been pending in Albany for the past 15 years and has not passed.
- The Department of Health is currently conducting a study on staffing ratios, and results are due by the end of the year. The study takes into account a full range of factors from a variety of stakeholders. It would be best to wait for the results of that study before pursuing further efforts to codify staffing ratios into law.
- There is a need for flexibility in staffing depending on the care needs of patients. The current proposal concerns nurse staffing ratios and does not fully address the flexibility needed with respect to other kinds of professional services that are needed to provide care.
- There is presently a deficit of \$ 1.7 billion in the Medicaid budget this year – which is expected to grow to more than \$4 billion next year. Long-term care providers – who rely primarily on Medicaid dollars to care for the frail elderly – are already adversely impacted by the current budget. This legislation would impose additional costs on an already burdened system causing many providers to cease to operate.

Leon Bell, Director of Public Policy, and Shanna Murphy, Lead Delegate from the Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of NY, of the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA), with the assistance of Anna Longo and Odetty Tineo, made the following points:

- A draft resolution based on City Council Resolution No. 396 sponsored by NYC Council Members Fernando Cabrera and Rafael Salamanca, Jr. in support of the pending state legislation was distributed.
- Manhattan Community Boards 3 and 8 have passed similar resolutions in support.
- NYSNA has received letters of support for this legislation from 4 out of 5 Borough Presidents.
- There are currently inadequate staffing ratios at present and RN's Ann Longo and Odetty Tineo spoke about situations at Allen Hospital and at the Children's Hospital where they believe there are instances of inadequate nurse staff ratios. Longo said there should be 8 nurses in the Obstetrics unit at Allen but there are often as few as 4-5 nurses.
- They indicated that they believe the use of "travelers" (substitute nurses) on units to satisfy staffing levels is not appropriate and that more permanent nursing staff are needed.
- Nurse staff ratios in various units at NYP and at the city's Health & Hospitals facilities were discussed.
- They believe that the \$2 billion that is estimated to be needed to satisfy staffing ratios can be obtained by redirecting dollars from non-direct costs.

- Passage of this legislation will encourage other health care occupations to do the same thing and will raise patient care outcomes accordingly.

A motion was made by Sally Fisher and seconded by Rosie Perez to pass the resolution with several amendments proposed by S. Simon. The motion was passed by the following vote:

Committee Members: 5-1-0-0

Other Board Members 1-0-0-0

Members of the Public 4-1-0-0

The NYSNA representatives also asked for a resolution regarding nurse staffing levels at NYP and said that a grievance hearing is scheduled for Nov. 18. S. Simon asked them to return to the next meeting on Dec. 5 to report on the results of the hearing.

6. Allen Hospital – possible closure of Psych beds

- Odetty Tineo of NYSNA said that 22 of 30 psych beds are currently in use at the Allen Hospital and that the reason for this is that there is an insufficient number of doctors.
- The Certificate of Need (CON) has not yet been submitted to the NYS Department of Mental Health to close the beds.
- Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, indicated that he will come back with updated information on the situation at the Allen Hospital.

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

- The committee's top two Expense Budget priorities – Expand Mental Health Services in the community and Increase Substance Abuse Services in our community – were ranked as CB 12's top two Expense Budget items. 7 of the committee's 10 Expense Budget requests were ranked among CB 12's top 25 requests. The others were ranked as #11, 13, 17, 20, 23, 31, 34 and 36. Our 3 capital Budget items were ranked as #12, 13 and 18.
- The City Council passed a bill to create 20 Commercial Waste Zones in the city, with a maximum of three private carters authorized to service businesses in each zone.
- There is no update on the cleanliness ratings at this time.
- The water main replacement project is continuing this week on Fort Washington Avenue from W. 169th St. to W. 171st St. and on W. 171st St. from Fort Washington Ave. to Haven Ave.

8. New Business:

- The Mayor has appropriated an additional \$37 million for new teams of mental health responders and for intensive services for those who are potentially violent
- Sally Fisher reported on a meeting held by WEACT in Inwood to discuss the impact of climate change.
- Mary Anderson announced that St. Spyridon Church is holding its annual Greek Food Festival this weekend.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Betty Lehmann