



The City of New York
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

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Health & Human Services Committee Minutes

February 18th, 2025

Marilyn Peña, Committee Chairperson – Health & Human Services Committee

DRAFT

Introduction and Initial Presentations

- Committee Chair Marilyn Pena introduces herself and the meeting agenda, emphasizing the importance of the presentation due to the new business being postponed.
- Anthony Jordan reminds everyone that the meeting is being live-streamed and requests clear introductions for the record.
- Committee Chair Marilyn Pena introduces Dr. Melinda Lance from Lincoln Hospital, who begins the presentation on the relocation of the Lincoln Recovery Center.

Presentation on Lincoln Recovery Center Relocation

- Dr. Melinda Lance introduces her team members, including Daniel Cologne, Xavier Herrera, Maria Broderick, and Wanda Gonzalez.
- Dr. Lance explains the need to relocate the Lincoln Recovery Center from its current basement location to a first-floor space within Lincoln Hospital.
- The relocation is expected to enhance service provision, potentially tripling the center's volume in the first three months.
- Xavier Herrera details the services provided by the Lincoln Recovery Center, including individual and group counseling, acupuncture, job training, and various support programs.

Challenges and Benefits of the Relocation

- Xavier Herrera highlights the challenges of the current location, including the separation of services and the difficulty in capturing clients.
- The new location will allow for better integration of services, reducing the number of clients lost due to distance and separation.
- Dr. Lance provides metrics, noting that the emergency department saw 19,000 substance use-related encounters last year, with potential for significant growth in the new location.

- The new space will include group rooms, individual offices, consultation rooms, and an acupuncture therapy room.

Community Concerns and Historical Context

- Committee member Claudia Rahman questions the historical separation of the recovery center from the hospital, leading to a discussion on the political and historical context.
- Xavier Herrera explains the historical reasons for the separation, including the Young Lords and Black Panthers' occupation of the hospital in the 1970s.
- The conversation touches on the community-driven nature of the recovery center and the potential benefits of relocating back to the hospital.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan raises concerns about the staffing levels and the need for a detailed plan to ensure the relocation is effective.

Staffing and Outreach Plans

- Dr. Lance and Xavier Herrera discuss the current staffing levels and plans to increase staff, including additional counselors and peer support workers.
- The conversation includes the integration of peer counselors in various areas of behavioral health and the potential for expanding services to include adolescent work.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan emphasizes the importance of outreach and innovative approaches to reach clients who may not seek traditional medical treatment.
- The committee discusses the need for a clear plan to ensure the relocation is successful and meets the community's needs.

Harm Reduction Vending Machine Proposal

- David Collie Moore and Angela Malka from Acacia Network present their proposal to install a harm reduction vending machine at Ramon Velez Health Center.
- The machine would provide free access to Narcan kits, fentanyl test strips, and xylazine test strips, aiming to prevent opioid-related overdoses.
- The committee raises concerns about the potential for misuse and the impact on children, leading to a discussion on monitoring and security measures.
- The proposal includes plans to track usage data and ensure the machine is accessible while minimizing risks.

Community Feedback and Next Steps

- The committee discusses the importance of community awareness and support for the harm reduction vending machine, including potential protests and the need for clear communication.
- The Acacia Network team agrees to provide additional information and data to address the committee's concerns and ensure the project is well-received.
- The committee requests a follow-up presentation to provide more details on the harm reduction initiative and its impact on the community.

- The meeting concludes with a discussion on the next steps for both the Lincoln Recovery Center relocation and the harm reduction vending machine proposal.

Mobile Shower Unit Overview and Impact

- Walter Harris explains the organization's mission to help the homeless and unhoused by providing showers and hygiene services.
- The organization has seen significant transformations in individuals' lives through showers, leading to better housing and employment.
- Walter Harris shares a success story of a former recipient who is now back in housing and working, highlighting the impact of their program.
- The mobile unit provides showers and care packages, including new clothing, to those in need, emphasizing the importance of hygiene in regaining dignity and stability.

Details of the Mobile Shower Unit and Services

- The mobile unit can provide up to 7,890 showers and care packages, catering to those living in various housing situations, including cars and rooming situations.
- The program requires participants to sign in, specifying their gender and ethnicity to track statistics and better serve the community.
- Each care package includes new clothing, and the organization prides itself on providing high-quality items.
- The mobile unit is sponsored by local entities, including the city of New Haven and out-of-pocket funds, ensuring continuous support for their services.

Operational Details and Community Collaboration

- The mobile unit is designed to meet the needs of the community, including those with disabilities, with high shower heads and a handicap-accessible design.
- The unit is equipped with high-pressure water systems and disposable hygiene items to ensure cleanliness and efficiency.
- The organization documents various statistics, including the number of showers provided, the demographics served, and the impact on the community.
- Collaboration with local entities, such as Yale University and Connor Scott Healthcare, facilitates referrals and further support for those receiving showers.

Challenges and Adaptations in Service Delivery

- The organization faces challenges in providing showers to those who are hesitant to leave their comfort zones, but they continue to offer services regardless.
- The mobile unit is designed to be flexible and can be set up quickly in various locations, including community give-back days and church outreach programs.
- The organization has adapted its services to meet the needs of the community, including providing larger sizes of clothing and hygiene items.

- The mobile unit is meticulously maintained to ensure a clean and comfortable experience for all users.

Community Impact and Future Plans

- The organization has served various communities, including New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey, and plans to expand its services in the Bronx.
- The mobile unit is designed to be self-contained, allowing it to be deployed quickly and efficiently in response to community needs.
- The organization is seeking funding to expand its services, including purchasing a new truck that can accommodate wheelchair access.
- The organization aims to continue providing high-quality services and collaborating with local entities to meet the needs of the community.

Questions and Clarifications from the Board

- Board members ask about the capacity of the mobile unit, the cleaning process between showers, and the voting item for support.
- Walter Harris explains the cleaning process, emphasizing the importance of maintaining high standards of cleanliness.
- The board discusses the voting item, clarifying that it is a request for support and funding to continue providing services to the community.
- The organization plans to expand its services and collaborate with local entities, including Lincoln Hospital, to provide comprehensive support to those in need.

Discussion on Health Disparities and Community Needs

- The board discusses the importance of addressing health disparities and providing resources for underserved communities, including those with autism.
- Member Jacqueline Dejesus shares her personal experience as an advocate for children with autism and the lack of resources in the community.
- The board emphasizes the need for collaboration with local entities, including Lincoln Hospital, to provide comprehensive health services and address community needs.
- The discussion highlights the importance of setting standards for health services and ensuring that the community's needs are met.

Future Planning and Collaboration

- The board discusses the importance of planning future health fairs and collaborations with local entities to address community needs.
- The board emphasizes the need for forward-thinking and setting standards for health services in the community.
- The discussion includes the importance of addressing health disparities and providing resources for underserved communities, including those with autism.

- The board plans to continue collaborating with local entities and setting standards for health services to meet the needs of the community.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- The board thanks Walter Harris for the informative presentation and discusses the next steps for providing support and funding.
- The board plans to hold a future meeting to discuss the budget and provide further support for the organization's services.
- The board emphasizes the importance of addressing health disparities and providing resources for underserved communities.
- The meeting concludes with a motion to adjourn, and the board expresses their commitment to supporting the organization's mission.

Action Items

- Provide a detailed budget breakdown for the Power in the Shower program.
- Identify specific locations in the Port Morris, Mott Haven, and Melrose sections of the Bronx where the Power in the Shower program could be most useful.
- Coordinate with Lincoln Hospital to explore potential partnership opportunities, such as referrals and funding support, for the Power in the Shower program.
- Plan a health symposium in collaboration with Lincoln Hospital and other local health institutions to address health disparities in the community.