



The City of New York
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

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Health & Human Services Committee Minutes

June 17th, 2025

Marilyn Pena, Committee Chairperson

DRAFT

Attendance: *Marilyn Pena, Carolyn Chamorro, Christine Licata, Marcelo Villagran*

Guest Speakers: *Kenneth Johnson, Herbert Quinones, Commissioner Annita Reyes*

Introductions and Meeting Overview

- Committee Chair Marilyn Pena introduces herself and the meeting's purpose.
- Various board members and representatives from different departments introduce themselves.
- Committee Chair Marilyn Pena thanks everyone for attending and introduces Kenneth Johnson for the presentation.

Presentation on Harm Reduction Strategies

- Kenneth Johnson and his colleague Herbert Quinones discuss harm reduction strategies citywide.
- They mention updates and data related to the community syringe program.
- Herbert Quinones explains the soft rollout of the syringe redemption program, offering 10 cents per syringe up to \$10 per person.
- The program includes training on how to secure syringes and carry naloxone.

Details of the Syringe Redemption Program

- Herbert Quinones provides a detailed explanation of the syringe redemption program, including its operation and locations.
- The program aims to address syringe litter and provide financial incentives for safe syringe disposal.
- Specific locations for the mobile unit, such as Cortlandt and E. 148th Street, are mentioned.
- The program also includes syringe kiosks in parks like St. Mary's for safe disposal.

Community Concerns and Questions

- Committee Chair Marilyn Pena opens the floor for questions, focusing on the mobile unit's vision and locations.
- Discussion on the need for additional sites in the South Bronx, including 138th and Park Ave and Pulaski Park.
- Concerns about syringe litter around schools and parks are raised.
- Committee Chair Marilyn Pena emphasizes the importance of expanding the program to other areas of the Bronx.

Training and Safety Measures

- Member Christine Licata raises concerns about the safety of community members picking up syringes.
- Herbert Quinones clarifies that participants must be trained and registered before receiving incentives.
- The training process is described as short, lasting no more than 15 minutes.
- Kenneth Johnson adds that participants cannot receive incentives without proper training and registration.

Data and Program Impact

- Jose Quintana inquires about the number of mobile units and their locations.
- Herbert Quinones explains that the organization partnering with the city has a proven track record from a similar program in Boston.
- The program has shown positive results, with syringe complaints reduced by up to 50% in some areas.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan asks about the program's expansion and the criteria for determining new sites.

Addressing Addiction and Overdose

- District Manager Anthony Jordan discusses the broader issue of open drug use and its impact on the community.
- Herbert Quinones explains the role of naloxone in reversing opioid overdoses and the importance of training.
- The conversation touches on the challenges of administering naloxone and the potential for public safety issues.
- Herbert emphasizes the need for community education and support for harm reduction efforts.

Community Engagement and Training Opportunities

- Anthony Jordan suggests using the community board's space for training and community engagement.
- Herbert Quinones offers to conduct Naloxone training sessions and other health-related workshops.
- Anita Reyes mentions the availability of mental health and resilience training.
- The importance of community involvement in addressing health issues and supporting harm reduction efforts is highlighted.

Future Plans and Collaboration

- District Manager Anthony Jordan asks about the city's plans for addressing addiction and overdose.
- Herbert Quinones mentions the syringe redemption program as the latest initiative in harm reduction.
- The conversation explores the need for innovative solutions and collaboration with other departments.
- Anita Reyes suggests looking at the city's mental health plan for additional strategies.

Closing Remarks and Next Steps

- Committee Chair Marilyn Pena thanks everyone for their participation and emphasizes the importance of community support.
- The meeting concludes with a discussion on upcoming events and training opportunities.
- The importance of community engagement and education in addressing health issues is reaffirmed.

Action Items

- Provide data on the monthly/weekly collection numbers and breakdown by location for the syringe redemption program.
- Coordinate with the community board to schedule Naloxone training and other health-related workshops in the board's meeting space.
- Explore expanding the syringe redemption program to additional locations in the Bronx identified as problem areas by the community.