



Donovan Richards  
Queens Borough President

## Community Board No. 2

43-22 50th Street, 2nd Floor

Woodside, New York 11377

(718) 533-8773

Fax (718)-533-8777

Email [qn02@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:qn02@cb.nyc.gov)

[www.nyc.gov/queenscb2](http://www.nyc.gov/queenscb2)

Anatole Ashraf  
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert  
District Manager

**June 9, 2025**

### **Health and Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee**

#### **Meeting Minutes**

*This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom*

#### **Committee Member Present:**

Lauren Springer, Chair  
Amparo Abel-Bey, Vice Chair  
Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos  
Leticia Vasquez

#### **Committee Members Absent:**

Nellie Afshar  
John Bahia  
Warren Davis  
Benjamin Lucas  
Alyssa Sawicki  
Phugelzen Sherpa

#### **Health and Human Services Public Members Present:**

#### **Health and Human Services Public Members Absent:**

Andrea Thomas  
Olivia Jackson Lewis  
Robert Wohner  
Judy Zangwill

#### **Community Board 2 Staff:**

Debra Markell Kleinert

#### **Guest**

John Lavin, Director of Clinical Services for Mental Health Providers of Western Queens  
Sasha Cobo, Director of Financial Services for Mental Health Providers of Western Queens  
Grant Ewing

Lauren Springer, Chair of the Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee, welcomed everyone to the committee meeting.

The Committee Chair introduced John Lavin, Director of Clinical Services at Mental Health Providers of Western Queens (MHPWQ). Mr. Lavin shared the following about the organization:

- It's a nonprofit organization that has several locations in Queens, including Sunnyside, Woodside, and Jackson Heights.
- In Woodside, a chemical dependency program is located at 62-07 Woodside Avenue on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, and a behavioral health clinic is located across the street at Western Queens Consultation Center, at 61-20 Woodside Avenue.
- The programs located in Woodside operate under the auspices of the New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), and both programs have their contracts managed by the New York City Department of Mental Health and Hygiene.

Mr. Lavin shared the following details about the Western Queens Recovery Program in Woodside:

- The program serves adults and adolescents with drug and alcohol dependency, as well as children of individuals with substance dependencies.
- Services include individual counseling, problem-solving groups, and psychoeducation groups focused on educating participants about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Separately, the organization has a prevention program, and Mr. Lavin shared the following details:

- The prevention program is in Jackson Heights.
- The program provides education in Western Queens schools, such as IS125, and offers psychoeducation on the dangers of substance use, as well as related on-site counseling.
- The program faces fiscal challenges due to a finite budget. Sasha Cobo, the program's Director of Financial Services, struggles to hire bilingual staff at competitive salaries which has led to high staff turnover. Additionally, paying rent at Jackson Heights is unsustainable.
- Although the psychoeducation material is prescriptive and costly, and cannot be duplicated, he expressed his desire to continue the program because helping teens and youth avoid drugs and alcohol is paramount. He also informed the program's oversight agencies that running this program has become fiscally challenging.

Mr. Lavin requested a letter of support. He offered to draft the letter or have Queens Community Board 2 write one. The letter would support the prevention program's relocation from its Jackson Heights location to co-locate with the recovery services program at 62-07 Woodside Avenue.

Amparo Abel-Bey made a motion to send a letter of support for the program's request, and Rosamond Gianutsos seconded the motion.

The committee members requested specifics to write the letter, including who it should be addressed to, the current location of the program, where it would relocate to, and the types of programs it would be co-located with at Woodside. Mr. Lavin indicated he would provide that information.

**The committee discussed the following additional topics:**

- There was a discussion on dates to tour Aviation High School, where the Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee, the Engagement Committee, and staff from Sunnyside Community Services could attend.
- Rosamond Gianutsos expressed her interest in including in CB2s newsletter the services Mental Health Providers of Western Queens offers, especially those to students.
- Lauren Springer noted that she is trying to arrange a meeting with Patrick Martinez and Tannia Chavez, members of the Engagement Committee, about potential collaborations with the Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee.
- The committee expressed its continued interest in having someone from the Northwell School of Health Sciences attend a committee meeting, since the school will open in September, and the Committee Chair noted that it would be a good opportunity to share the opportunities the school will provide.

Amparo Abel-Bey made a motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Rosamond Gianutsos.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava