

Minutes of the Health, Hospitals & Social Services Committee
Bronx Community Board 8
Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 7:00 pm
Bronx Community Board 8 Office – 5676 Riverdale Ave, Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471

Meeting Recording: <https://youtu.be/uZpDXij EeQ?si=ZJY8bWQOKLM8sa3a>

Meeting Called to Order at 7:03 pm

Board Members Present: Dr. W. DeBeatham (Chair), S. Chittilappilly, Dr. J. Gomez, S. Matthews
Board Members (Zoom): Rabi B. Kaplan
Community Members (Zoom): J. Ward, A. Javier, Sebastian C., L. Fang, M. Knight (all of CUNY); M. Rabner (MJHS); M. Michael,

Minutes of November 12, 2025 - Approved 4 in favor, none opposed

Chair's Report:

- Discussion of the “Big Beautiful Bill” and impact on Insurance Premiums.
- Possibility of having Senator Rivera to present for a meeting, thoughts about topics for discussion; Unfinished business - namely the opening for the Vice Chair Position
- NYC Mental Health Hotline - can call 988, or <http://988.lifeline.org>. It is a resource uh that is available to the community in terms of call or chat and can provide connections to resources and counselors.
- The state of domestic violence resources available via the 50th Precinct.
 - “Home Plus” which will change locks for uh victims of domestic violence
 - Safe Horizon. Possibility of having representative from Safe Horizon speak in the future
 - Victim Advocate. The victim advocate who is assigned to the 50th precinct is presently in orientation.
- Collaboration with other stakeholders in this jurisdiction
- Collaboration with the Aging Committee - potential topics include intimate partner violence, caretaker abuse, social isolation.
- Mosaic Mental Health - new space on 239th. Potential to discuss some of the resources that they have uh uh available for the community.

Guest Speaker - L. Feng (and other students in the CUNY School of Public Health): Discussion of INT 1179-2025; Harm Reduction and Fentanyl Test Strips

- The 1179 bill was designed to address New York City ongoing Fentanyl overdose crisis.
- Bill was introduced by **Councilman Eric Botcher**, with plan to reintroduce next year
- Fentanyl is involved in the majority of the overdose death in deaths in our city (over 2400 New Yorkers deaths last year); includes unknowingly using drugs contaminated with Fentanyl.
- one of the most effective and low-cost tools to reduce these deaths is Fentanyl test strips.
- awareness and access across our neighborhoods limited.
- This bill would essentially establish a citywide public outreach and education campaign
- Directs the health department to work with harm reduction providers, share multilingual information, and clearly communicate where people can access and safely use test test strips.
- Additional Information

- based on our research, we actually found that two-thirds of people are likely to relapse within weeks to months after addiction treatment. And even those who receive treatment and then relapse are at an even higher risk of overdosing because of their decrease in tolerance to their drug of choice.
- Fentanyl test strips part of harm reduction strategies, including needle exchange, etc
- While available, and relatively low cost, test strips aren't always accessible or readily available.
- Xylazine, commonly a veterinary tranquilizer, also on the rise. Testing available for this substance as well
- Increases in overdoses related to the older population

Questions from Board/Community

- Detail as to how many deaths in CB8 Jurisdiction? Presently unknown, but will provide
- Where can test strips/ Narcan (Naloxone) be obtained presently? - NYC.gov, including information re: training, virtual lessons, etc
 - Also available via <http://newyorkmatters.org> (syringe exchange, test strips, etc)
- How easy is it to use? How long to get a result? Less than 5 min - simile to pregnancy tests
- Questions re: user behaviors, e.g. How does positive test impact decisions?
- Does the bill address just fentanyl test strips, or does it speak more broadly to harm reduction? (current form, does not, but they are open to modifying the bill)
- How can this committee support harm reduction initiatives? - Advocacy, word of mouth
- Need for Community Board to see the actual bill before deciding on support/ extent of support

Unfinished Business:

- Opening for Vice-Chair
 - Importance for newer members to be involved, for sake of continuity and institutional memory
 - Availability of Senator Rivera for January meeting
- Possibility of Summit-Style meeting with other committees - e.g. **Ageing; Public Safety; Youth**
 - Need to brainstorm broad topics
 - Domestic Violence/ Intimate Partner Violence
 - Isolation
 - Caretaker Abuse
 - Harm Reduction as a whole (Fentanyl Test strips, Naloxone)
- Budget Priorities Fiscal Year 2028
 - Review priorities from 2027
- Flu Season - high spike in cases
 - Availability of Low-Cost/Free Immunizations
 - Possibility of Mobile clinics? Local Hospital Outreach?

Next Meeting: January 14, 2026

Motion to Adjourn

Meeting Adjourned 8:08 pm