

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX**  
**MINUTES OF THE HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES**  
**COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2009**

**PRESENT**

Maria Khury  
Phillip Friedman  
Nancy Pollock  
Bridget Maybury  
Joyce M. Pilsner  
Steven I. Froot  
Steven Balicer

**AFFILIATION**

Committee Chair  
Committee Co-Chair  
U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs  
CB 8  
CB 8  
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CB 8

**Introductions:**

Guest Speakers: Nancy Pollock, LCSW-R – U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs  
Bridget Maybury, RN – Bx CB8/ U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs

**Agenda Items:**

**Presentation on Suicide Prevention**

- Suicide prevention hotline is discussed – the hotline is for veterans as well as the general public.
- The suicide hotline has two options – veterans have the option to speak directly to health care professionals; general public callers are provided with referrals to healthcare organizations.
- In an effort of early intervention, it is discussed how even non-clinicians at the V.A. hospital are being/have been trained to identify potential signs of suicidal thoughts in patients.
- The V.A. hospital has a walk-in clinic for patients with thoughts of suicide.
- It is stated that suicide is the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States; approximately 32,000 people per year.
- It is stated that New York State ranks #49 out of 51 (50 states + Washington D.C.) with respect to suicide cases. It is briefly discussed among committee members that the low occurrence of suicide relative to the other states may be attributed to the abundant availability of mental health services.
- It is stated that:
  - the season with the most suicides is Spring, possibly due to people having more energy than during the Winter (When polled several attendees predicted Winter to be the season with most suicides.)
  - Wednesday's are the most common days for suicides; the reason for this is not known.
  - Women make the most attempts at suicides but men commit the most successful suicides.
  - The most common method for suicides involves the use of guns. The next common methods involve hanging followed by poisoning (inclusive of over-dosing.)

- White single males are at the highest risk of suicide.
- An article written by Ms. Maybury ('Suicide Prevention') is distributed and discussed.
- Handouts of Risk Factors for suicide are distributed. A listing of famous people who committed suicide is read.
- It is discussed that antidepressant medications used for patients with thoughts of suicide sometimes have side effects (i.e. weight gain, sexual issues.) which cause patients to stop taking their medication. Patients also sometimes stop taking their prescribed medication due to feeling better. It is mentioned another reason patients stop taking their medication is due to cost.
- Patients on antidepressants should not stop taking their medication for the previously mentioned reasons. It should be discussed with their doctor when to stop taking their medication.
- A partial definition of a suicide attempt is an action which leaves permanent marks.
- Warning signs of suicide are discussed.
- "Protective factors" steering people away from suicide are factors such as positive social skills, strong ties to family and friends, having children, etc.
- Some cultures and some groups of people feel there is a stigma to depression & thoughts of suicide. This may inhibit people in these groups to seek help.
- It is stated that the first recorded suicide of a veteran occurred in 1862.
- A handout depicting a happy person and sad person is distributed. The attendees are polled as to which of the two are at risk of suicide. The answer is either person is at risk. It is stated that a person who appears happy is sometimes happy due to their decision to commit suicide and the relief they feel.
- Chairperson presents guest speakers letters of appreciation on behalf of the Committee.

#### **Tobacco Resolution from Queens, CB7**

- Queens CB7 resolution is distributed to attendees.
- The resolution, directed towards storeowners, relates to displayed advertisements of tobacco products perceived to target children.
- The statistics outlined in the resolution are briefly discussed; origin and accuracy of statistics to be reviewed by Committee prior to bringing the resolution to the full board.
- Committee member agrees to review statistics and research other anti-smoking group programs have in place

#### **Prior Meeting Minutes:**

Prior meeting minutes review and approved.

**Chairperson's Report:**

- Chairperson requests ideas for future meeting guest speakers.
- Letter regarding Community Board Budget cuts discussed and distributed to Board members.

**Old Business:**

**Leake & Watts**

- A complaint rendered against Leake & Watts is summarized by the Chairperson. The complaint was rendered by someone who did not receive a diploma. The complaint was forwarded to Leake & Watts who said they would assist the person who rendered the complaint.

**New Business:**

No new Business

Meeting Adjourned 8:25 PM

Submitted by,

Phil Friedman

Minutes were approved by Maria Khury, Chairperson.

PF:db