

## BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

### MINUTES OF THE HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT MANHATTANVILLE HEALTH CARE CENTER ON JANUARY 30, 2012

#### PRESENT

Steven Froot  
Michael Heller  
Joyce Pilsner  
Philip Friedman  
Karen Pesce  
Steven Balicer  
Sylvia Alexander  
Xaxia Sanchez  
Madeline Ginzburg  
Nils Graham  
Dana Lennon  
Herb Young  
Aviva Grasso

#### AFFILIATION

Committee Chair  
Committee Vice Chair  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
Community member  
CB8  
DOHMH

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

The minutes of the November 22, 2011 meeting were considered and approved.

#### Presentation by DOHMH

#### **Alcopops: Limiting youth access and availability to reduce underage drinking**

The Chair introduced Aviva Grasso, Alcohol Policy Analyst for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

**Alcohol** is the most commonly abused substance among teens

- Underage drinking accounts for ~20% of alcohol consumed
  - In NYC alone:
    - 27% of youth aged 12-20 years reported using alcohol in the past month
    - 52% of youth aged 12-20 years reported binge drinking
- 90% of the alcohol consumed by youth is during binges
- Teens who drink have more:
  - School and social problems
  - Suicide, homicide and sexual assaults
  - Car crashes, burns, falls and drowning
- Teens who drink are also more likely to:
  - Have multiple sex partners
  - Get pregnant or get someone pregnant
- Research indicates brain still developing through teenage years - drinking may have life-long affects

**Alcopops** are premixed alcohol beverages, sweet and often carbonated

- 4 -12% alcohol content, often higher than average for beer
- Packaged in bright colors & designs, similar to soft drinks, sports drinks

- Examples: wine coolers, “Mike’s Hard Lemonade”, “Baccardi Silver”

### **Alcopops are sold like beer and wine**

- Same locations and hours of sale
- Sold alongside juice, soda, milk, other groceries

### **Alcopops and youth?**

- Sugary, sweet taste of alcopops leads to increased consumption and more frequent intoxication among younger adolescents, who may not have the palate for other alcoholic drinks.
- Cheaper for its alcohol content than all but the cheapest beers
- Teenagers are 3 times more likely to be exposed than adults, particularly young women, which strongly suggests targeted marketing
- AMA study identified a disproportionate number of underage girls drinking alcopops, particularly during binge drinking occasions
- 34% of youth surveyed mistakenly believe alcopops have less alcohol than beer or wine
- Alcopop is a “gateway” drink: 40% of kids who begin drinking before age 15 will become “alcohol dependent” in their lifetime

### **Exposure to alcohol advertising increases alcohol use**

Evidence shows alcohol advertising and packaging increases underage drinking by

- Making alcohol more appealing
- Making it seem like everyone drinks alcohol
- Developing brand recognition and loyalty
- Directing much of the marketing through social media

### **1 in 7 NYC teen drinkers report purchasing alcohol from retail stores:**

- 85% of NYC retail alcohol outlets are licensed to sell beer and alcopops; these are many times more common than outlets licensed to sell liquor

### **Mayor’s proposal:**

- to require that alcopops be sold in liquor stores only, instead of locations where beer, soft drinks & groceries are sold – so that
  - a. it is obvious underage consumers would have no reason to be at the location but to purchase alcohol
  - b. locations selling alcopops would be far more limited
  - c. control over sales could be tightened
- but, this would require a change in State law

A discussion ensued regarding the presentation, including questions for Ms. Grasso.

### **Chairperson’s Report**

- The Chair thanked Xaxia Sanchez and Vice Chair Mike Heller for alternating the responsibility for taking the meeting minutes.
- Committee member **Beverly Fettman** is recuperating from a fall and resulting surgery, and the Chair wished her a speedy recovery.

- The Chair recognized Sylvia Alexander, who mentioned the passing of former Education Chair and longtime CB8 member **Debbie Bowden**, and information about the funeral was shared.
- Vice Chair Mike Heller reported on the Borough President's January 10, 2012 informational meeting about **Health Impact Assessments** ("HIA"), which are analogous to environmental impact statements, but which are not yet legally required. An example would be requiring the MTA to evaluate the likely health effects on individuals of a construction project like the Second Avenue subway.
- March 27, 2012 is the **Annual Diabetes Action Day** to raise awareness of the importance of healthy eating, an active lifestyle and monitoring blood sugar levels.
- On **February 15, 2012, at 4 pm**, a group of sixth graders at **St. Gabriel Elementary School** will make a presentation to CB 8 entitled, "**Reducing Youth Access to Tobacco Products.**" The School is located on West 235<sup>th</sup> Street, between Arlington and Netherland Avenues. All are encouraged to attend. The Chair will investigate whether the Youth Committee can attend as well.

### **Follow-up Business**

**Health Screening:** The Chair reported that Riverfest, now scheduled for Sunday, June 24, 2012, is open to having health screening on site at Mount St. Vincent. We need to propose the specific screening to the Riverfest officials. Dr. Madeline Ginzburg will investigate a dental screening, and Steve Froot will investigate a proposal for blood pressure/blood glucose testing.

Xaxia Sanchez reported on a mobile health screening van operated by Project Renewal/Streetworks to serve homeless youth free of charge anywhere in NYC.

**Budget Priorities:** The Committee discussed the next year's budget priorities. Joyce Pilsner will reach out to the Jewish Board for Children & Family Services, which has two facilities in CB8, to inquire whether they have funding needs. Funding of RMHA's geriatric mental health program is another likely priority. In connection with continuing the proposal for funding the establishment of a permanent EMS restocking station in CB8, the Chair requested that Phil Friedman investigate the most recent EMS response rate statistics for CB8 in comparison to city-wide averages.

### **New Business**

**Forum on Underage Drinking:** It was suggested by Steve Froot that the Board, through the Committee, might hold a forum on underage drinking and/or binge drinking in the future. Possible panelists could include a medical person, such as a local hospital ER doctor who sees cases of alcohol poisoning; representatives from local colleges or high schools; a representative from DOHMH; a medical researcher into alcohol abuse. Steve Balicer volunteered to contact Manhattan College to inquire about resources they have regarding underage drinking, with an eye to participation, and contact will be made with the College of Mount St. Vincent along the same lines. Joyce Pilsner offered to

inquire with Riverdale Mental Health (RMHA), a licensed substance abuse program, as a possible participant in such a forum. Nils Graham suggested that illegal drug use was an equally pressing problem. (A subset of the drug abuse issue is use/abuse/diversion of prescription and over-the-counter (legal) drugs.)

The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm.

The **next meeting** will be on Wednesday, February 29, 2012 at 7:30 pm at Manhattan College Lower Campus, Leo Hall in the Scala Room (#215). The address is 3825 Corlear Avenue (west side of the street) between 238<sup>th</sup> & 240<sup>th</sup> Streets. Parking is available in a lot adjacent to the building.

Prepared by Xaxia Sanchez, CB8 Committee Member  
Approved by Steven Froot, Chair  
Health, Hospitals & Social Services Committee