

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX  
MINUTES OF THE HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 10, 2011**

PRESENT

Steven Froot  
Michael Heller  
Joyce Pilsner  
Phil Friedman  
Beverly Fettman  
Herb Young  
Diana Gonzalez  
Anderson Torres  
Carlos Infante  
Sylvia Cox

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair  
Committee ViceChair  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
Leake & Watts  
Schervier/Bon Secours  
HRA - Office of Child Support Enforcement  
HRA - Office of Child Support Enforcement

**Chairperson's Report**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm, welcomed the attendees and wished everyone a good New Year. The Chair announced that the next meeting will be February 10, 2011 (another meeting off the normal cycle owing to the Presidents Day holiday), but that in March we would return to the third Monday in the month.

The Chair referred to a mailing to the Committee from the Board Office that blood supplies are running very low, and are particularly needed during the winter.

The Chair provided a summary of the December 8, 2010 forum on the Health Care Reform legislation, as well as indirect coverage of the forum in the local press and his subsequent letter to the editor.

The Chair introduced Anderson Torres, Director of Health Initiatives at Schervier/Bon Secours Nursing Care Center, who spoke briefly about his background and his interest in attending meetings of the Committee on a regular basis. Mr. Froot also welcomed Diana Gonzalez, Director of Therapeutic Services at Leake and Watts, who will be attending Committee meetings in lieu of Leake & Watts Executive Director Alan Mucatel.

**The minutes of the November 15, 2010 meeting were considered and approved.**

The Chair then introduced Carlos Infante and Sylvia Cox, Outreach Specialists at HRA's Department of Social Services, Office of Child Support and Enforcement.

**Presentation: Office of Child Support Enforcement**

Mr. Infante introduced his colleague Ms. Cox, who distributed literature and made a presentation to the Committee. The following summarizes the highlights of a detailed presentation, including active questioning from the Committee. Ms. Cox explained that Child Support Enforcement ("CSE") has an outreach unit that goes into the community to educate the public about child support. The unit is part of the NYC Department of Social Services, which is within HRA, and was formerly a part of the Administration for Children's Services. She focused her remarks on how the agency helps non-custodial parents meet their obligations. She described how families enter the child support

system either through (1) a petition for child support by the custodial parent in Family Court or (2) if the custodial parent is on public assistance, the Department of Social Services takes the non-custodial parent to court. In the latter situation, the Department of Social Services runs the program and tries to recover some of its costs. Before an order of child support is entered against a non-custodial parent, paternity must be established through DNA testing or voluntary acknowledgement. DNA testing is provided at an affordable cost by CSE (\$30 per tested individual, or \$90 for mother, father and child), but requires cooperation of all parties. The obligation to provide support continues until child reaches the age of 21. CSE collects child support and distributes it to the custodial parent. There are reciprocal agreements with other states to attempt to insure that coverage is maintained wherever the non-custodial parent resides. In the situation in which non-custodial parents owe child support payments to the Department of Social Services, CSE offers programs to assist low-income non-custodial parents by reducing their arrears down to as little as \$500, if they are at the poverty level (the Arrears Cap), or by modifying their monthly support obligation downward (the MDO program). CSE maintains mediation centers in several boroughs to address non-financial issues between custodial and non-custodial parents, but there are presently none in the Bronx, although the agency is looking into this issue. The outreach unit of CSE is available to make presentations wherever there is interest or need. The Chair thanked Ms. Cox and Mr. Infante for their presentation.

### **Follow-up Business**

**Budget Cycle presentation:** Phi Friedman, Community Board Treasurer and Budget Committee Chair, made a presentation about the budget process as it involves the Committee. Participation in the budget process is an official function of the community board. Mr. Friedman emphasized that it is necessary for the Committee and the Board to set priorities that are not wasted (not needed any longer) or impossible to fulfill (a city agency with jurisdiction over the allocation has indicated it will not fund or there is some other logistical or legal reason the funding cannot occur). He suggested researching all proposed requests by going to nyc.gov, communicating with the appropriate city agency, review the City's 5-year Plan, examine the Community Health Profile, and make use of available statistics (for example, EMS/FDNY data concerning response times). Each Board committee recommends priorities that are ultimately reviewed by the Board as a whole. We are now working on FY 2013 process. Mr. Friedman reviewed a series of materials created by the office of the Manhattan Borough President that explain the process. At the committee level, each committee advocates for the submission of both capital and expense budget priorities. CB 8 committees are set up in a way that generally aligns them with equivalent or eponymous city agencies. The budget process also is used to support the needs of local community-based organizations or local not-for-profit service providers. The Budget Chair must balance priorities among the committees. He drives the process by communicating with city agencies regarding Board recommendations. Committees should conduct research to investigate what is behind specific requests (for example, from a community-based organization) to insure the viability and legitimacy of the proposed funding. Conversely, committees should not submit a budget priority request for an organization without that organization's approval. A discussion of previous years' Committee requests relating to ambulance and EMS stations took place within this context. Joyce Pilsner added that

not-for-profit agencies can apply for City Council member item funding, and how this differs from direct funding by city agencies through contracts. Mr. Friedman also discussed the way in which specific board requests interface with the borough-wide consultation process. The Chair indicated he would solicit committee members, the District Manager, and city agencies as to what needs they are aware of or recommend for funding. The Board ultimately sets its priorities at a public hearing, but committees have the responsibility to conduct outreach and let the community know what it is doing whether through a public hearing or monthly meeting.

**Consideration of next Committee forum:** The Chair suggested that binge drinking in our community might be the subject of another community health forum to be planned for late next year.

### **New Business**

The Vice Chair will be leading outreach to community-based organizations such as the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services (Beatman Center, Ittleson Center). The Chair asked for suggestions of organizations that might wish to present at committee meetings, offering Riverdale Mental Health Association and Leake & Watts as examples of presenters last year. Suggestions included the Riverdale YM-YWHA, Montefiore Medical Center, North Central Bronx Hospital, Columbia Presbyterian/NY Hospital - Allen Pavilion, and some of the nursing homes and extended care facilities in the community such as Schervier/Bon Secours and the Hebrew Home for the Aged.

There was also a brief discussion by the Committee of the role of urgent care centers in the health care delivery system.

Meeting adjourned 9:20 PM.

Prepared by Michael Heller, Vice Chair  
Approved by Steven Froot, Chair  
Health, Hospitals & Social Services Committee