

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX
MINUTES OF THE HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 21, 2011**

PRESENT

Steven Froot
Michael Heller
Joyce Pilsner
Phil Friedman
Steve Balicer
Karen Pesce
Beverly Fettman
Sylvia Alexander
Diana Gonzalez
Lisa Licht Hirsch

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair
Committee Vice Chair
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Leake & Watts
Jewish Board of Family & Children's
Services

Chairperson's Report

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

The Chair announced that the next meeting, on Wednesday, April 13, would be early in the month due to the Passover holiday, but that the May and June meetings would revert to the regular schedule of the third Monday of the month.

The minutes of the February 10, 2011 meeting were considered and approved.

The Chair then introduced Dr. Lisa Hirsch, Senior Psychologist and Outreach Representative at the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, J.W. Beatman – Riverdale Office.

Presentation: Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services -- Beatman Center

Dr. Hirsch is based at the Beatman location at West 239th Street and Henry Hudson Parkway. The organization provides programs in all five boroughs and Westchester. The focus is on children 5 and up and adults who require mental health services. The organization provides a full service team approach, including social workers, psychologists and other professionals. There is an emphasis on cultural sensitivity and diversity. Settings include families, groups and individual cognitive therapy. Psychiatrists are also on staff and on-site. There is a strong emphasis on continuity of care. Also on-site is the Learning Center, providing comprehensive evaluation and remediation of learning disabilities for children and adults. More in-depth testing is done at JBFCS than by the Department of Education. Some treatment is provided for certain aspects of autism spectrum disorders, but normally these patients are referred to other providers, as the focus of JBFCS is on mental health. The intake evaluation is comprehensive, and care is directed accordingly. Several hundred patients are now being served in the new building. All insurance programs are accepted, and payments for the uninsured or underinsured are available on a sliding scale basis. Where sufficient demand exists, groups are available for different situations, such as parenting skills, ADHD boys, etc. Although some patients are mandated by the court system, most patients are self-referred by word of mouth and other health care providers. Beatman also provides home-based services for at-risk children through the family intervention program. All staff members have training in domestic violence identification and follow-up. All programs requiring medication must be combined with talk therapy, the primary modality.

Joyce Pilsner remarked that JBFCS works collaboratively with Riverdale Mental Health association and each fills the gaps in the other's services. There are several off-site programs

that provide school-based counseling, such as at PS 7. Like other health providers, they have been hit by Medicaid re-design reductions and cutbacks in funding.

The Ittleson Center on Iselin Avenue near Henry Hudson Parkway is a residential treatment facility operated by JBFCS that treats severely emotionally disturbed children. Child care workers at Ittleson are on duty 24/7. Residents are children who have been discharged from inpatient psychiatric facilities who cannot be cared for in their homes. The Center is funded through various sources.

HHSS committee member Diana Gonzalez of Leake and Watts discussed the possibility of linking the services provided by the two organizations.

Follow-up Business

The Chair requested reports on follow-up assignments from the previous meeting, regarding the previous year's budget priorities and new input solicited from community-based organizations about unmet social service needs. Past HHSS committee chair Maria Khury was consulted concerning the most recent history of the Committee's budget requests.

Three **expense budget** priorities from the past year were reviewed, including

Riverdale Y program for special needs children. Mr. Froot spoke with the executive director, and it appears that the program is no longer in existence due to loss of foundation funding. The budget request will not be renewed at this time.

RMHA Geriatric Program. Joyce Pilsner reported that the program is still functioning and successful. This budget request will be renewed.

Psychiatric, Physical or Autistic disability-related services (not organization-specific). Mr. Froot indicated that the source of this budget request could not be ascertained, and it will not be renewed.

Karen Pesce looked into the two **capital budget** requests presented by the Committee in previous years relating to the range of ambulance-related funding requests, including full funding for the EMS restocking facility at the 50th precinct, and, separately, assignment of a new ambulance to the local community. Ambulances are provided by FDNY, as well as hospitals, such as Montefiore, BronxLebanon, etc. Each contracts with NYC to provide a certain number of "tours." If it were determined by the Fire Department/EMS that based on response times additional ambulances were needed, it would not necessarily be assigned to a specific community because deployment of the fleet is not done based on where a particular ambulance is stationed. The latest statistics indicate that the response time in our community is as good as or better than in other areas of New York City. Otherwise, new ambulances are purchased on a regular replacement schedule based on which vehicles are the oldest/most in need of replacement. Regarding the restocking station, the issue is if the distance of the restocking/decontamination station from the location of the ambulance – that is, does the restocking occur so far from the communities served that actual response time is increased. Currently the ambulances serving CB 8 restock at the 50th Precinct and the Woodlawn location at 233rd Street (although a question was raised as to whether the Woodlawn station was currently functioning). It may be that 4 of the 6 ambulances currently serving our community restock away from the 50th Precinct. Mr. Heller volunteered to reach out to EMS to request that an EMS representative attend a future committee HHSS meeting to discuss such issues.

Mr. Froot brought up the issue of whether a funding request (an expense item) should be made to the FDNY for HazMat training for the crew of Engine Company 52 on Henry Hudson Parkway. A discussion took place as to whether a local fire crew with such training might be diverted elsewhere for special assignments such as anti-terrorism details.

Several committee members reported on efforts to **identify unmet community social services needs**. The KRMH Food & Hunger Project (“Food Pantry”) based at Church of the Mediator is not funded by the City, but is backed by religious institutions and individual donors in the community. As such, the District Manager indicates it is unlikely to be funded by a city agency. Beverly Fettman reported that Riverdale Neighborhood House is in the process of constructing a building for its teenage programs, and that effort is mostly funded. Ms. Fettman also made contact with the Bronx Jewish Community Council and the Ethical Culture Society (homeless program) but had not received responses and will follow up. Steve Balicer said he would follow up with Kingsbridge Heights Community center and Marble Hill Community Center. Mike Heller will follow up on Mosholu Montefiore Community Center.

Joyce Pilsner will continue her investigation of **urgent care centers** in our community.

New Business

Ms. Pesce discussed the difficulty she had encountered in identifying services for individuals suffering with mental illness within apartment buildings who are causing problems for other residents. Several possible actions were described, including traditional landlord-tenant legal remedies.

Mr. Froot discussed the possible impact of federal block grant reductions as described by the Borough President’s Office in a recent communication. Several local community-based organizations will be impacted by such cuts, including those which provide social and cultural services to seniors and counseling and support to at-risk families in the areas of domestic violence prevention, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS support services, and nutrition.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Next month’s meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 13, 2011, at the Board office.

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