

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX  
MINUTES OF THE HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 20, 2011**

**PRESENT**

Steven Froot  
Michael Heller  
Joyce Pilsner  
Maria Khury  
Philip Friedman  
Karen Pesce  
Steven Balicer  
Sylvia Alexander  
Beverly Fettman  
Dana Lennon  
Russell Agdern

**AFFILIATION**

Committee Chair  
Committee Vice Chair  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
CB8  
Community resident  
Office of Senator Gustavo Rivera

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

**The minutes of the May 16, 2011 meeting were considered and approved.**

**Chairperson's Report**

Big Apple Rx: The Chair led a brief discussion of the Big Apple Rx discount plan operated by the NYC Department of Health, which is not related to the privately sponsored discount prescription drug plan that was the subject of a presentation at a previous full board meeting. Steve Balicer commented that according to the list on the agency website, many local stores participate in the program.

Letter to City Council opposing cuts in mental health programs: The Chair asked Joyce Pilsner to report on a proposed letter on behalf of the Committee to Oliver Koppell and the other members of the Bronx delegation to the City Council opposing proposed funding cuts to Geriatric Mental Health, Children Under Five Mental Health and other special mental health and alcoholism initiatives run by not-for-profit agencies that serve Bronx residents. Councilman Koppell chairs the City Council Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Disability Services. Ms. Pilsner explained that these agencies have experienced significant cuts in recent years. Mr. Froot expressed his view that the Board should be supportive of all locally-based service providers who request our support. The Committee voted unanimously to send the letter.

**Budget Priorities**

The Committee's proposed priorities were circulated for discussion. The Committee voted to approve submission of both budget priorities by a vote of 8 in favor, with one abstention.

**Capital:** EMS stocking station: The Chair reported that he would continue to follow up with Chief Booth of EMS about the status of the initiative to establish a new EMS decontamination & restocking station on city property adjacent to Van Cortlandt Park, near the intersection of Mosholu Avenue and Broadway. The item will appear as the Committee's capital budget request.

**Expense:** Funding for Riverdale Mental Health geriatric program is being continued from last year's request.

### **Discussion of Ideas for HHSS 2011-12 Agenda**

**Health vans:** Members discussed the availability of mobile health vans that could provide our community with testing/screening in areas such as HIV tests, mammograms, blood pressure, asthma, cholesterol, Hepatitis C and diabetes. Saint Barnabas Hospital was identified as a prior provider of services such as mammograms. It was suggested that if such vans were in operation, we could try to arrange availability at existing, scheduled community events such as youth markets and farmers markets. It is possible that government agencies like Administration for Children's Services might still be operating vans. Although CB 8 does not have a hospital facility within its boundaries, it is generally considered a medically well-served community, even if certain neighborhoods within CB 8 are medically underserved, so we may encounter resistance to the allocation of mobile resources to our area.

The following HHSS members were tasked with researching the availability of mobile health vans: Dana Lennon (Morris Heights Health Center and other health centers); Beverly Fettman (genetic testing through Einstein); Mike Heller (Bronx-based hospital centers); Steve Balicer (offices of Assemblyman Dinowitz, Councilman Koppell, and our three state senators).

**Health Fair:** The ability of the committee to organize a health fair on its own using available Board resources was discussed, and the sense of the Committee was that this would be beyond the resources of the Board.

**Informational events:** The Chair suggested that the Committee might consider planning another forum, such as a panel discussion on binge drinking, perhaps at a local college campus. Prescription drug abuse by young people was also mentioned as a possible topic for a forum.

The Chair then introduced Russell Agdern, Director of Community Affairs for Senator Gustavo Rivera.

### **Presentation: Bronx CAN Health Initiative**

Mr. Agdern described the initiative as being born during the state senatorial campaign. The goal is to tackle behaviors that lead to obesity and weight gain by enrolling participants in the "Challenge." He described his personal experience in attempting to

lose weight. Participation in the Challenge involves modifying behaviors in the areas of physical exercise, diet (limiting soda and fried foods and replacing them with fruits and vegetables), and smoking cessation. About 50 people are taking the Challenge to date. The CAN initiative is working in conjunction with a number of health-related organizations. The goal is to involve more participants from the CB 8 section of the Senator Rivera's senate district. More information about Bronx CAN, including on-line registration in the Challenge, can be found at [www.BronxCan.com](http://www.BronxCan.com).

In connection with the presentation, a discussion took place about having the Community Board organize cooking demonstrations linked to the three youth markets it sponsors.

A good summer was wished to all. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

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