

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE HEALTH, HOSPITALS & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 29TH, 2012

<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>AFFILIATION</u>
Steven Froot	Committee Chair
Michael Heller	Committee Vice Chair
Joyce Pilsner	CB8
Philip Friedman	CB8
Taylor Friedman	
Morgan Friedman	
Karen Pesce	CB8
Steven Balicer	CB8
Sylvia Alexander	CB8
Xaxia Sanchez	CB8
Robert Fanuzzi	CB8
Beverly Fettman	CB8
Dana Lennon	Community member

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

The minutes of the January 30, 2012 meeting were considered and approved.

Presentation by VISIONS Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

The Chair introduced Donna Karlson, a member of the VISIONS Bronx Advisory Board. VISIONS has been serving blind New Yorkers for 85 years, and currently provides services for 5000 individuals in all five boroughs. VISIONS is supported by government grants and private donations. (Ms. Carlson herself is the transitions, guidance and career counselor at the New York Institute for Special Education, founded in 1831 as the New York Institute for the Blind, on Pelham Parkway.)

The VISIONS headquarters is on Greenwich Street in Manhattan. It provides educational and rehabilitation services in schools that educate the blind and visually impaired, and sends instructors and staff into people's homes to provide rehabilitation services, orientation/mobility assistance, cooking instruction and home organization strategies. All services, including job placement and counseling, are provided to clients without charge. As an example of the wide range of services is provided, VISIONS will adapt computers so they can be used by the blind and vision-impaired. VISIONS operates a senior center that serves up to 200 blind elderly clients at Selis Manor on West 23rd Street; Selis Manor provides services for children in the afternoon, and housing is available through a HUD facility in the building. VISIONS also operates a camp in Rockland County supported by Lions Clubs that permits whole families to accompany blind children and stay overnight in a rustic setting that is designed to be accessible to the blind and visually impaired.

Chairperson's Report

- The Chair attended a ceremony to mark the **opening of the new gymnasium/classroom building at the Ittleson Center** run by the Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services. Councilman Oliver Koppell, who earmarked

funds for the construction, was the guest of honor. The Ittleson Center provides day and residential educational services to severely mentally ill children between the ages of 5 and 13. Joyce Pilsner explained the work of the Jewish Board, which presented to the Committee last year.

- Several members of the Board, including Ms. Pilsner and Mr. Froot, as well as District Manager Nicole Stent, Housing Chair Tom Durham, Youth Chair Andy Cohen, and Environmental Chair Rosemary Ginty, attended a **presentation by sixth graders at St. Gabriel Elementary School** about reducing youth access to tobacco products. Billed as “**You Can’t Fool Us Tobacco**,” the presentation emphasized the harmful chemicals and substances found in cigarettes as well as the deleterious health effects of cigarette addiction. The children prepared a power point presentation, posters, and reported on a survey of stores that sold cigarettes or advertised tobacco products near the school. Mr. Durham gave the children a display he constructed that highlights second-hand smoke effects by comparing a light bulb taken from a smoker’s apartment to a bulb taken from the apartment of a non-smoker.
- The Chair discussed a CB 8 resident (referred by Beverly Fettman) who reported a bad experience with the **Montefiore emergency room and ICU**. Vice Chair Mike Heller was able to refer the complaint to the Chief Medical Officer, who is following up with the complainant about his concerns.
- The Borough President’s Office is holding a **Medicaid Rights Forum and Disability Resource Fair on March 15, 2012** at the Bronx County Courthouse Rotunda. The forum is 10 am – 12 noon, while the fair is 12 noon – 4 pm.
- **March 27 is American Diabetes Association Alert Day**. The purpose is to raise awareness in persons who are at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes as the result of age, body mass, diet, behavior and heredity.

Follow-Up Business

PS 7 Health & Nutrition Fair (May 12): The Chair reported on the health & nutrition fair that will take place at PS 7 on May 12, under the auspices of the Bon Secours Healthy Communities Initiative. It is expected there will be a nutrition speaker, food demonstrations, BMI testing, health information, and giveaways. District Manager Stent is working with Sarah Shaik of Bon Secours on planning, and may involve the Committee in reaching out to other elementary schools in Community Board 8. Board Chair Bob Fanuzzi spoke about his interest in getting the Committee involved supporting the PS 7 health & nutrition fair, with an eye toward replicating the fair at other elementary schools.

Health Screening – Riverfest: Mr. Froot reported that he has a commitment from the Bronx County Dental Association to provide dental screening at Riverfest. He is in the process of identifying a provider for blood pressure and/or blood sugar testing.

Forum on Underage Drinking – Fall 2012: The plan is to hold a forum on underage

drinking next fall. The Committee discussed the format and the target audience. Steve Balicer has spoken to Dr. Satterly at Manhattan College about the college's participation in the forum. The focus will be on the public health issues rather than the public nuisance effects of underage and binge drinking. We will try to reach out to Mount Saint Vincent before the next meeting.

Budget Priorities: Phil Friedman is trying to get Board-specific EMS response rate statistics to bolster our request for a local EMS restocking station. Although FDNY/EMS says "there is no money now," it is helpful to keep the request out there, if supported by indicia of necessity. Geriatric mental health services provided by Riverdale Mental Health will be a Committee budget priority.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The **next meeting** will revert to the third Monday of the month, on Monday, March 19, 2012 at 7:30 pm at the Board Office, 5676 Riverdale Avenue, Suite 100, opposite Skyview Shopping Center.

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