

## Minutes from Committee for Concerns of the Aging

Thursday February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023

Attendance:

**Committee:** – Present: Mary Anderson (Chair), Yosef Kalinsky (Assistant Chair), Maria Luna, James Bosley, Richard Allman. Absent: Mariam James . **Public Members:** Dory Garcia (ARC – Ft. Washington), Carol Weeks (Dyckman Senior Center), Elizabeth Urena (Golden Era Social Adult Day Care) **Public Attendees:** Dr. George Dawson, Ramon Dasilva (NYPL), Ashly Carlos (SHOPP), Diane Ashley (MJHS -Isabella Center), Miryam Rabner (MJHS), Ashton Stewart (MJHS), Verna Arthur (NYC DFTA), Cheyenne Morillo (Harlem Health Action Center), Rosie Bernard (MJHS), Ilana Dunner (Riverstone Senior Center), Leidy Jorge-Pena (STAR Senior Center), Shuli Gutman (Moriah Center), Michael Hano, Loangys Sanchez (Elder Justice Program), Masiel Veras (NORC), Pauline Ferrante ( DOHMH), Ashton Stewart ( MJHS), Jasmin Scott (Harlem Mental Outreach).

- Chair Mary Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:38 AM. Members and Attendees introduced themselves.
- Presentations:
  - Ramon Dasilva (NY Public Library)
    - Questions related to book mobile and location at 179<sup>th</sup> Street
    - Inwood Library services (while the Washington Heights Location is closed)
      - Books for visually impaired
      - 30-minute technology classes
      - Books my mail program
      - Support programming for seniors
    - Question raised as to why the book mobile was discontinued – Ramon said it's a "staffing issue" – it requires 2 people to run. They are currently actively looking to fill the staff positions and hope to resume the route.
  - COVID Updates – Presentation by George A. Dawson, MD, CHW-Ryan Health-Adult Medicine and Pauline Ferrante, Office of External Affairs, NYC DOHMH
    - Dr. George Dawson gave an update on the effects of Covid on the elderly.
    - Elderly are much more likely to suffer the effects of "Long Covid" i.e. memory issues, respiratory problems, headaches, liver problems, and intestinal disorders. Symptoms of Long Covid last 4 weeks or more after first being infected with the coronavirus.
    - Infection from Coronavirus can also initiate immune system disorders.
    - The good news is that deaths, and Long Covid syndrome, are decreasing across the U.S. due to the vaccines. However, elderly continue the highest

rates of infections and death for those who did receive the latest boosters. This issue is especially true in our districts which are among the lowest in the city as regards to boosters received among the elderly.

- One in three seniors will experience Long Covid after being infected.
  - Paxlovir is recommended for those infected by Covid but must be administered in the first 5 days after infection. News about the downsides of this treatment have discouraged many from seeking the treatment. Some effects reported are increased respiratory illnesses and decreased immunity. However, Dr. Dawson opined that these side-effects are less the results of Paxlovid than they are simply the effects of covid infection in the elderly.
  - He does discourage people from taking Paxlovid if they already suffer from Lupus and other immune disorders and are taking immune disorder medication, especially those that include steroids. He said that these steroidal medications blunt the effects of Covid vaccine, making long covid and other residual ailments from covid more likely.
  - Dr. Dawson praised an initiative by President Biden's administration that encourages Pharmacies that test for Covid to administer Paxlovid immediately to patients upon a positive test result.
  - The doctor concluded that he foresees that an annual covid booster be administered, especially to seniors.
- o The next presentation was by Pauline Ferrante of DOHMH.
- She provided a tour of the DOH web site pertaining to covid, vaccination, paxlovid etc. The site at NYC.Gov/health is easy to use in order to find testing and vaccination sites near you. She also stressed the need of Seniors receiving the Bivalent dose which better protects against the Omicron variant.
  - She also stressed that many seniors are not tech savvy enough even to navigate this site so asks CBs help in disseminating this information.
- o Old business
- Mary said that she was hoping to get agreement from Access-a-Ride to present to the committee and from OMNY transit system in the near future.
  - Mary said she was having a breakfast meeting with New York DA Alvin Bragg where she will ask about crimes committed against the elderly. And by the elderly.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:49