

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – April 6, 2017

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (Chair), Mitchell Glenn (Asst. Chair), Richard Allman, Daryl Cochrane, Elizabeth Lehmann, Javier Trejo, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Wanda Garcia, Andrea Kornbluth (excused).

GUESTS: Madelyn Gould, Warren Ng, Sandra Harris and Harmon Moats, Columbia University Medical Center; Olajide Williams, Jeffrey Bokser and Julio Batista, NY-Presbyterian Hospital; Ting Barrow, Uptown Progressive Action.

S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m. and introduced the committee members.

1. **“A Public Health Approach to Suicide Prevention”** – Dr. Madelyn Gould, Professor of Epidemiology, Columbia University Medical Center, gave a Powerpoint presentation:

- According to 2015 U.S. mortality data, suicide was the second leading cause of death among these age groups: 15-19 year olds, 20-24 year olds, 30-34 year olds, and the 10th leading cause of death overall
- 44,193 died from suicide in 2015 – 121 suicides per day
- Suicide rates are going up in all age groups
- More 10-14 year olds die from suicide than from motor vehicle accidents
- Manhattan has the highest rates in NYC – 66 suicides in 2012-14
- Rates highest among whites, lowest among African Americans
- In 2015, 50% of suicides in U.S. involved firearms, 2% involved jumping from heights
- Firearms more often used by men; women more often use pills.
- In 2014, 19% of suicides in NYC involved jumping from heights, 10% from firearms
- Erecting barriers is an effective means of restricting suicides – should be at least 8 feet high
- In Montreal, after a fence was erected on a bridge in 2004, suicide rate decreased by 76%,
- George Washington Bridge should have safety fencing to prevent suicides.

Discussion followed regarding the resolution passed by CB 12 in December calling upon the Port Authority “to act with the urgency this situation demands and install temporary and permanent safety fencing on an expedited basis in order to save as many lives as possible.” The Port Authority has not yet responded.

S. Simon: Columbia University Medical Center and NY-Presbyterian Hospital also should urge the Port Authority to install the fencing.

R. Allman: Assembly Member De La Rosa is writing a letter.

S. Harris: Columbia has provided info on suicides to the Assembly Member and State Senator Alcantara.

2. **“Time Is Brain” – NY Presbyterian Hospital’s Mobile Stroke Unit** – Dr. Olajide Williams, Medical Director, NYP/CUMC Stroke Center, gave a Powerpoint presentation:

- Someone gets a stroke every 45 minutes. 780,000 Americans are stricken every year. It is the 5th leading cause of death in U.S. Caused by a blocked or ruptured blood vessel in the brain.
- Strokes disproportionately affect African Americans and Hispanics.
- Modern medicine has treatments that make the paralyzed walk again – “the Lazarus Phenomenon.” Patients should be treated within 4½ hours with special medication. Clot-busting medication dissolves clot and restores blood flow to brain. With some patients, a catheter is used to pull out the clot.
- Every minute the blockage in the brain results in the loss of 1 or 2 million brain cells. An adult brain has 86 billion cells.
- Too many patients arrive in the ER too late. Of the 862 stroke victims seen last year at 168th Street, only 337 arrived within 6 hours of getting a stroke.
- Most people don’t know the symptoms and don’t realize they are experiencing a stroke, so they don’t go to the hospital right away.
- B.E.F.A.S.T. is a mnemonic device to recognize the signs and symptoms of stroke:
 - B is for Balance – Does the person have a sudden loss of balance?
 - E is for Eye – Has the person lost vision in one or both eyes?
 - F is for Face – Does the person’s face look uneven?
 - A is for Arm – Is one arm hanging down?
 - S is for Speech – Is the person’s speech slurred? Does he or she have trouble speaking or seem confused?
 - T is for Time – Call 911 now!
- Taking an ambulance is the only way to go to the ER with a stroke to make sure you get proper treatment.

- The paramedics will alert the ER that a stroke patient is on the way so they can make sure the CAT Scan is free and a neurologist is called to take care of the patient.

Jeffrey Bokser then spoke about the hospital's new Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit:

- NYPH is the first hospital on the East Coast to have one of these "transformational" units. It's been in use since mid-October in both Washington Heights-Inwood and the Upper East Side.
- It's slightly larger than a regular ambulance and contains a CAT Scan so patients can be checked immediately.
- The specialized care team includes five staff: a neurologist, 2 paramedics and a CT technologist.
- It operates 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., the hours when people most likely suffer strokes.
- Patients are served regardless of immigration status.
- "We are bringing the ER to their doorstep."

- 3. Continued discussion regarding proposed NY Health Act** – After some discussion about the need to preserve Obamacare and the feasibility of NY State having its own single-payer health care system, Glenn/Trejo moved that the committee should support passage of the NY Health Act in the State Legislature. The motion was passed, 6-0-1.
- 4. Columbia University Medical Center Report** – Sandra Harris, Assistant Vice President, Government & Community Affairs, reported as follows:
 - President Trump's proposed 18% cut in funding for the National Institutes of Health "would be devastating to the research work we do every day at the Medical Center." There will be a Rally for Science in support of academic health centers in Washington, DC on April 22.
 - Teens Take Over Health Day will be held at the Vagelos Education Center, 104 Haven Ave., on 4/22.
- 5. NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** -- Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, reported as follows:
 - NYPH Dept. of Human Resources is holding a resume writing and interview skills workshop at the Allen Hospital on 4/25. Another one will be scheduled at the main campus at a later date.
 - An Appreciation Breakfast for Police, Fire and EMS will be held 5/3.
- 6. Isabella Geriatric Center Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported:
 - Mark Kator, President/CEP since 1998, retired last week. The renovated recreation hall will be named for him. Three people are running Isabella now temporarily.
 - Isabella is participating in the Uptown Art Stroll 6/7-6/19.
 - A campus plan has been revived, including construction of a 15-story building with affordable senior housing and other services. It will be presented to CB 12 in the in the future.
 - There are still vacancies at Isabella House, an independent living facility for people 62 and over at 525 Audubon Ave.
- 7. Old Business** – S. Simon reported on the following:
 - Recycling Rate for Community District 12: Following last month's presentation, we obtained the city's recycling statistics for December 2016, which show that our district had a 17.1% diversion rate (9th best in Manhattan). Manhattan's rate was 21.8%. The city overall was 18.8%. It was agreed that we would invite an outreach worker from GrowNYC to the next meeting to discuss how we can improve our rate.
 - EMS Station 13 Response Time: Our local ambulances are continuing to have a better record on response time than ambulances in the rest of the borough and the city as a whole. In 2016, average response time for 32,411 calls in our district was 5 minutes 11 seconds. In Manhattan, it was 5:39. In the city overall, it was 5:53.
 - Update on Street and Sidewalk Cleanliness Ratings: The ratings for February for our district were 83.2% for streets and 95.8% for sidewalks. .
 - DEP Service Complaints from CB 12 Residents: The top requests in February involved lead testing kits (171), noise from barking dogs (21) and noise from construction before/after hours (17).

8. **New Business** – S. Simon reported that a Remedial Action Work Plan is being prepared to address the contamination in the former commercial building at 3896 Tenth Ave., which is to be used by the Inwood Academy for Leadership charter school for its high school. He said he would arrange for a presentation of the plan at a future meeting.
9. **Announcements** – R. Allman: Assembly Member De La Rosa is holding a forum on the NY Health Act at Isabella on 4/21.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon.