

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – January 5, 2017

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Wanda Garcia.

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Anderson.

GUESTS: Approximately 50 local residents attended.

COMMUNITY FORUM, “STAYING HEALTHY IN 2017”

This was a special meeting in which the committee once again co-hosted a community forum with the Columbia University Medical Center. The topic for this forum was “Staying Healthy in 2017,” and it was held at the Russ Berrie Medical Science Pavilion. Four faculty members at the School of Nursing discussed disease prevention research they have conducted. Ross Frommer, Vice President – Government & Community Affairs, CUMC, opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. and gave welcoming remarks.

Steve Simon, chair of the committee thanked CUMC for holding the forum and for inviting the H&E Committee to co-host it: “This forum is important for two reasons: it will provide us with important information we can use in our everyday lives, and it will let us know about the groundbreaking research that is done here at the Medical Center, something that the community board has been encouraging Columbia to share with the community for years.”

Dean Bobbie Berkowitz said the new School of Nursing building on W. 168th Street and Audubon Avenue should be completed in June and that the school had recently opened its third Nurse Practitioner Group Practice one block away at 516 W. 168th St,

Professor Elaine Larson, Associate Dean of Scholarship & Research, was the moderator. The four presentations were as follows:

1. Improving Your Health: Lessons from the Washington Heights-Inwood Informatics Infrastructure for Comparative Effectiveness Research (WICER) Project -- Suzanne Bakken, PhD, RN, Professor of Biomedical Informatics, Alumni Professor of the School of Nursing

- The project involved collecting data from 6,000 people in the community to learn how to improve the health of WH-I residents. Over 90% were Latinos, and most interviews were conducted in Spanish. Held six town hall meetings in community in Spanish.
- Questions asked of survey participants related to nutrition, physical activity, depression, health and illness perception, etc.
- Health concerns most often cited: cancer (4,916), diabetes (4,691), hypertension, blood pressure, stroke and cholesterol (about 4,000 combined), HIV/AIDS (1,491).
- Health status: most people said their health was very good to excellent; low levels of chronic stress, mostly financial; 40% had hypertension; high rates of obesity and high blood pressure; low levels of smoking and alcohol use; more sleep disturbances than national average; fruit and vegetable consumption below recommended levels; low level of physical activity.
- The survey team is creating infomatics (graphics with survey results) and giving them to the respondents.
- 60% of respondents already see doctors at CUMC/ New York-Presbyterian Hospital.
- Data will be used for other purposes, including Precision Medicine, initiative launched by President Obama in 2015, an emerging approach to disease treatment.

2. The acceptability of rapid HIV testing among Latinos in Washington Heights/Inwood – Tawandra L. Rowell-Cunsolo, Ph.D., M.A., Assistant Professor of Social Welfare Science

- Currently there is no cure or vaccine for HIV
- Latinos are overrepresented among individuals with HIV: 24% of those diagnosed with HIV in 2014; 27.8% in the northeast in 2015
- 21% of the WICER survey participants expressed concern for HIV/AIDS.

- In rapid HIV testing, results are available in 20 minutes; previously one had to return days later for results.
- She randomly selected over 200 participants from the WICER survey. 93% agreed to participate (192). They were offered testing and counseling. No one tested positive.
- 68% had engaged in unprotected sexual behavior.
- Study found that community-based testing is feasible and acceptable among Latinos.

3. Video Information Provider: A mobile app for Symptom Self-Management in persons living with HIV –
Rebecca Schnall, PhD, MPH, RN-BC, Assistant Professor of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

- Creating mobile app for people with HIV to improve their quality of life. No cure, but there is treatment.
- Annual number of infections has remained stable – about 50,000.
- Number of people living with HIV has increased. An 18-year-old who takes medication can live until 65. HIV no longer a death sentence.
- 17% of people with HIV live in NYC.
- University of California – San Francisco School of Nursing issued an HIV/AIDS symptom management manual in paper form, which was found to be effective. It provides strategies on how to deal with 21 symptoms, such as fatigue, forgetfulness, anxiety.
- This information was put on the web with the Video Information Provider in 2010.
- The app provides easy access to these strategies and is currently being tested .

4. Preventing Asthma, Getting Asthma and Taking Care of Asthma – Maureen George, PhD RN AE-C FAAN,
Associate Professor of Nursing

- Asthma is an epidemic in the U.S., mostly among African Americans and Puerto Ricans.
- 82% of adults and youths 12 and older in national survey who have the illness have uncontrolled asthma.
- Symptoms: squeezing of muscles around breathing tubes, and swelling and twitching inside breathing tubes.
- Causes: genetic and environment (pests, cockroaches, dust mites; pollution; animals).
- Allergic asthma is common in children.
- Non-allergic asthma is common in adults, caused by cold air, exercise, heartburn, etc.
- Prevention – very little can be done. There is a window during pregnancy and early childhood, such as having a cat or dog in the home before a child's 1st birthday.
- Being in a large family or going to a day care center, where a child is exposed to a lot of germs, could be helpful.
- Avoid unneeded C-sections.
- Breastfeeding provides general health benefits, including helping to prevent asthma.

5. A question-and-answer period followed, in which the audience had the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters.

The forum was adjourned at 8:35 p.m., at which time a reception was held in the lobby area.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon.