

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – January 5, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (chair), James Amodeo, Isaiah Bing, David Kach, Elizabeth Lehmann, Helen Morik, Edgard Nau, Raybblin Vargas, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Fe Florimon.

GUESTS: Gisselle Mejia, City Harvest; Sandra Garcia, Manhattan Times.

Steve Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

1. New York-Presbyterian Hospital Report – Helen Morik, Vice President - Government & Community Affairs:

- Hospital's census goes down in December; there are fewer elective surgeries because of the holidays
- Concerned about the upcoming state and federal budgets. She attended the Governor's State of the State speech yesterday; he didn't say much about health care.
- Last year the Governor and the State Legislature agreed on a Medicaid budget for two years, with a 4% increase for this year.
- The Congress passed the "doctors' fix" to prevent a 27% cut to Medicare reimbursements, along with the payroll tax deduction and the extension of unemployment benefits – but only for two months.
- NYPH is cutting its budget by \$150 million over three years. Its total annual budget is \$3 billion. \$60M was cut this year: no programs or services were cut, and no personnel were laid off (staff was cut only through attrition). Another \$50M is expected to be cut this year.
 - S. Simon: But the Fort Washington Geriatric Practice at 99 Fort Washington Ave. was closed.
 - H. Morik: It was considered to be a consolidation. The AIM clinic is being renovated to accommodate those patients. (She will arrange a site visit afterwards.) The dental clinic is still at 99 Fort Washington. The hospital would like to move it to 600 W. 168th St., where DOH previously had a dental clinic.
- NYPH received discretionary grants of \$75,000 from Council Speaker Quinn and \$4,000 from Council Member Jackson for its Eugene Lang Medical Scholars program, an intensive program in which junior high school students commit to attend sessions at the hospital on Saturdays for six years. Many of the students decide to pursue medical careers.
- NYPH is working on its targeted health fairs; the next one is for artists.
- An event is planned for February to introduce Robert Kelly, the new President, and Steven Corwin, the new CEO, to the community.

2. Isabella Report – Elizabeth Lehmann, Director of Marketing and Communications, said that Isabella is facing budget issues similar to those at NYPH. She just received "final numbers" on the shortfall in reimbursements, and Isabella is working on its revised budget for the year. "We will have to make adjustments in operations." She said she will have more info at next month's meeting.

3. Old Business – S. Simon reported that he spoke to the Sanitation Department, which has approved CB 12's request to reduce street cleaning or alternate-side-of-the-street parking days throughout our district. (A resolution was passed by the H&E Committee and the full CB 12 in November.) Sanitation will present its revised street cleaning plan to CB 12 for our comment. A letter confirming this was sent to the board.

G. Mejia: City Harvest has reached its goal of completing 300 surveys for its community food assessment. The results will be compiled by April, and she will report back to us.

4. New Business – I. Bing: there was a water main break on W. 177th St. between St. Nicholas and Audubon Aves. last month. He asked DM Ebenezer Smith to get us info on the incident. He pointed out the need to replace the old water and sewer lines in our district and suggested that we should ask DEP for info on the age of these lines. The committee members agreed with this suggestion. S. Simon said this is a point that should be brought up at the District Service Cabinet and at the annual budget consultations with DEP.

R. Vargas: attended a Health Care for All Coalition (consumer-based community groups) meeting in Albany today. The main topic was the health care exchange, the new system for health insurance – a "virtual

marketplace" to enable people to choose the best possible plan for themselves. Most people don't know anything about the health care exchange. Under the federal health care reform, the state has until Jan. 13, 2013 to enact into law an exchange with its own standards and requirements for NY. The federal government will impose one on NY if the state fails to do so by that date. The Assembly has passed a bill, but the State Senate has refused to pass it because the Republicans hope that the Supreme Court will invalidate the federal health care reform law. The state can implement it as part of the Medicaid Redesign Team. She suggested that CB 12 organize a public forum on this issue, either by itself or together with the other upper Manhattan boards. "The community should have a voice in this discussion." The committee agreed that a public forum should be held in the coming months and to discuss it further at the next meeting.

I. Bing: attended a forum on illegal pesticides sold in local bodegas that was held at the CB 12 office in November. EPA officials said that they wanted to come to the H&E Committee to discuss education and enforcement. He gave S. Simon the name and e-mail address of an EPA official to contact.

5. **Mail** – Council Member Jackson sent a letter to the State Mental Health Commissioner following up on the resolution passed by the H&E Committee and the full board last month requesting the restoration of funding for five school-based mental health clinics operated by NY-Presbyterian Hospital.
6. **Announcements** – E. Lehmann: Isabella, City Harvest and the United Hospital Fund are sponsoring a diabetes prevention breakfast workshop for the elderly on Jan. 27.

Since none of the invited speakers showed up at this point, and the rest of the agenda was completed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – February 2, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (chair), James Amodeo, Isaiah Bing, David Kach, Elizabeth Lehmann, Helen Morik, Edgard Nau, Raybblin Vargas, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Fe Florimon.

GUESTS: Gilberto Colon, Alianza Dominicana; Maria E. Rivera, Renaissance Health Care Network; Catarina Rivera, Healthy Kids in the Heights; Jules Douge, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corp.

Isaiah Bing, assistant chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. S. Simon arrived a few minutes later.

1. **Alianza Dominicana's HOPE program** – Gilberto Colon, Senior Peer Educator, spoke about the services offered by this 25-year-old program, including STD testing and HIV testing. Patients are referred to the Dept. of Health downtown and to the NYPH ambulatory care practice at 21 Audubon Ave. A new program for youths (14-21 years old) serving as peer educators in the community will start soon. They will be paid \$7.75/hour and work after school 5-8 p.m. Colon, originally a client, has now worked for the program for almost 13 years. He said the number of clients currently is 110-120, about the same as past years, while the number of people getting infected with HIV, especially the undocumented, is increasing. Alianza works with the Gay Men's Health Crisis to provide rental assistance to clients. His program does outreach by having the staff go to bodegas, barber shops, beauty salons, parks, etc. with condom kits and literature. They have done workshops in the stores.

2. **HHC Clinics in Washington Heights-Inwood** – Maria E. Rivera, Associate Director, Renaissance Health Care Network (RHCN), explained that RHCN is comprised of seven medical centers and clinics in eight schools in upper Manhattan and is affiliated with the NYC Health & Hospitals Corp. Two of the sites are in our district: Dyckman Clinica de las Americas Health Center, 175 Nagle Ave., and the Washington Heights Child Health Center, 600 W. 168th St. The seven centers have 87,000 visits per year.

The Dyckman Center provides comprehensive medical services, women's health, pediatrics, HIV counseling/testing, nutrition, diabetes education classes, social work, etc. The Dyckman Center is working with the nearby Planet Fitness on smoking cessation and with City Harvest to distribute food to people at Dyckman Houses. It is attracting an increasing number of patients for general medicine: 287 visits in November 2010 and 441 visits in November 2011. Pediatrics patients dropped in the same months from 192 to 175.

The Child Health Center provides pediatric services, adolescent care (up to 21 years of age), HIV screening and testing, health education, nutrition, vision and hearing screening and chronic disease management (asthma, diabetes, etc.). The clinic is being spruced up "to make it more child-friendly." DOH closed the dental clinic in the building; RHCN is trying to reopen it.

She emphasized that patients can get an appointment within 48 hours and that the uninsured and undocumented can receive services. Fees are on a sliding scale based on income. They are expanding their outreach efforts, which is why she wanted to speak at this meeting. They have been walking through the neighborhood, handing out flyers. "We have to let the community know that we exist." Each clinic is open late one night. Dyckman is open Tuesdays until 7 p.m. Child Health Center is open Wednesdays until 7 p.m.

Jules Douge: she is willing to work with community agencies and businesses. She has quickly accepted referrals from NMIC.

S. Simon: As one of our budget priorities for several years, CB 12 has been requesting that more staff be hired for these two clinics. Should we continue to list that as one of our priorities?

M. Rivera: Staffing would not be my budget priority. That's not an issue. I would like to fix the waiting rooms in both centers to make them more warm and inviting. They need decent chairs and paint jobs...Also the front door at the Dyckman clinic is always locked and the staff has to buzz in patients. We need an HHC police officer to provide security so we don't have to lock the front door.

Helen Morik and Betty Lehmann said they would be in touch with her to discuss how NY-Presbyterian Hospital and Isabella respectively could collaborate with her. S. Simon said he would put her in touch with someone who is interested in beautifying waiting rooms in city agencies.

3. **New York-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Helen Morik, Vice President - Government & Community Affairs, reported that NYPH is trying to figure out the impact of the proposed state budget and that she has been lobbying in Washington, D.C. as well. Congress passed an extension of the payroll tax cut and unemployment insurance, which included the Medicare "doctors' fix," but only until the end of this month. "A lot of NYPH doctors

have already left the Medicare program because they don't get paid their costs. If the 27% cut in Medicare reimbursements goes through, a lot more doctors would quit Medicare. It would be a disaster for seniors. We're afraid they'll take \$ from hospitals, most likely from graduate medical education, to make up for the cut. Interns are paid by teaching hospitals as part of the Medicare program...By 2020 we will be short 30,000 physicians. We're hoping that the \$600M left over from Iraq will be used for Medicare. \$316 billion is needed to fix the reduction in doctors' fees for 10 years."

In response to a question from S. Simon, she said that NYPH has not yet written to the NY State Mental Health Commissioner correcting his letter to Council Member Jackson, in which he said that the hospital is closing five school-based mental health clinics because it lost a grant from the Robin Hood Foundation when in fact it lost funding from his agency. This was the point made in the resolution passed by CB 12 in December, in which the board called upon the NY State Office of Mental Health to restore the funding so the clinics could remain open.

4. **Isabella Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, reported that the state has cut more than \$7 million in reimbursements to Isabella's nursing home going back to the 2011 budget. Isabella has imposed a job freeze and is looking for efficiencies to avoid potential layoffs. Direct care is the last thing that would be affected. More cuts are expected this year from the state. Community-based services (home care, adult day health care) are not affected yet. Isabella's entire budget is \$120 million.
5. **Harlem Hospital Report** – Raybblin Vargas, CB 12 Representative to Community Advisory Board (CAB), distributed copies of the minutes of the Jan. 18 CAB meeting. She reported that all the cancer patients, who had been treated by Harlem staff at St. Luke's, are being treated again at Harlem Hospital. The new executive director, Denise Soares, was unhappy with the level of care provided at Harlem and wanted the Harlem staff to learn to use newer equipment and technologies available at St. Luke's so they can provide improved care to their patients. Harlem has been named a Center for Excellence for bariatric (stomach surgery) patients. Ms. Vargas also reported that Dr. Mandeville, chief of ob/gyn, asked her to help with outreach by setting up meetings with CBOs in Harlem and Washington Heights-Inwood. The Physicians Assn. of Greater New York (PAGNY), which represents doctors in six HHC units, has been able to fill all but 19 of 45 vacancies that existed at Harlem after the affiliation agreement with Columbia Medical School was severed. The CAB is planning to revive its newsletter; it used to be quarterly, and they hope to make it bimonthly.
6. **Old Business** – R. Vargas discussed her idea to hold a public forum to explain the concept of the Health Care Exchange that NY State is required to develop by Jan. 2013 under the Affordable Care Act. The exchange will act as a clearinghouse for different health insurance plans that would be made available to small businesses with not more than 50 employees and to individuals not otherwise covered by insurance. If the states do not create their own exchanges by the deadline, spelling out the minimum benefits to be provided, they will be imposed by the federal government. The State Assembly previously passed a bill setting up an exchange, but the State Senate Republicans, presumably hoping that the Supreme Court will rule that the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional, have not acted. She suggested that a representative from the Community Service Society should speak at the forum. She is talking to Pam North about having all four upper Manhattan community boards sponsor the forum.

In response to a question from I. Bing, S. Simon said he would contact the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation again to request the release of the report on the remedial investigation and soil vapor intrusion evaluation conducted in regard to the brownfield at 4566 Broadway and find out whether a soil vapor extraction system is being or has been installed at 4580 Broadway, as he was previously told by the DEC project manager.

7. **New Business** – S. Simon passed out a copy of a report from the NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection regarding its response to complaints about brown tap water from various households in Inwood on January 23 & 24 as well as an article from DNAinfo. DEP determined that the water was and still is safe to drink.
8. Mail was reviewed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon (with assistance from Edgard Nau)

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – March 1, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (chair), Isaiah Bing, David Kach, Elizabeth Lehmann, Edgard Nau, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: James Amodeo (excused), Helen Morik, Raybblin Vargas.

GUESTS: Julian Clayton, Big Apple Rx; Shane Ojar and Humberto Galarza, NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection; Julio Batista, NY-Presbyterian Hospital.

S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

1. **Big Apple Rx Prescription Drug Discount Program** – Julian St. Patrick Clayton, Borough Representative, stated that this program was started jointly by the Mayor and the City Council and is geared for people without health insurance or whose insurance does not cover drugs. It cannot be used in addition to insurance to cover co-pays. There are no age, income or immigration status requirements. There are no forms to fill out; no information is taken from the patient. The average savings is 47%: 15% on brand name drugs, 53% on generic drugs. The card can be used in all 50 states and Puerto Rico; even non-New Yorkers can use it. The program is run by HealthTrans, a national company that processes claims from pharmacies for insurance companies. It submitted the winning bid to the City. A lot of pharmacies are already under contract with HealthTrans, which made it easier to sign them up for the Big Apple Rx program. No City tax dollars are spent on the program.

Kach: Who pays for the discount?

A: HealthTrans negotiates the reduced drug prices with the pharmacies, which forego their profit margins to get more customers. They benefit from the extra foot traffic; people buy additional items. He pointed out that pharmacies in different neighborhoods charge different prices for the same drug. You can look up BigAppleRx.com to find a list of pharmacies and what they charge for various drugs. Almost every pharmacy in Washington Heights-Inwood accepts the card – a total of 2150 out of 2300 drug stores throughout the city. Since May 2011, when the program began, New York City residents have saved over \$4 million. NYC is the only US city with this program. He said he has given some cards to nurses in the ER at NY-Presbyterian Hospital to pass out to patients, and he left some with the committee. For more info, call 311 or 1-800-697-6974.

2. **DEP's Testing Program for Drinking Water Quality in Washington Heights-Inwood** – Shane Ojar, Director, Community Partnerships, and Humberto Galarza, Manhattan Coordinator, Bureau of Communications & Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of Environmental Protection.

Galarza: NYC provides some of the best drinking water in the USA, as much as 1 billion gallons per day. There are 950 water sampling stations citywide, connected to city water mains, including many in Washington Heights-Inwood. About 1,000 samples are collected each month and tested at the DEP lab. 200,000 samples are taken in the upstate watershed each year. There were an unusually high number of dirty water complaints (23) from the CB 12 area in January, many from the NW corner of Inwood. In February, there were only three dirty water complaints from CB 12. There was construction in the area back in January. We replaced or repaired hydrants and shut down the water main. The discolored water was not a health issue (it may affect clothes being washed).

Ojar: Sediment builds up in the pipes. The first flow of water will scrape off some sediment after the main is turned back on. That's why we tell people to run water for a few minutes before they use it.

Hall: We've been getting dirty water in River Terrace [156-20/157-10 Riverside Drive West] a lot lately

Bing: Our housing stock averages 100 years old. Water can be affected by old pipes and groundwater contamination.

Ojar: The quality of the water is the same, regardless of the age of the pipes, because of the speed of the water. It's virtually impossible for groundwater contamination to seep into pipes.

Bing: There are plenty of water leaks in WH-I.

Galarza: DEP scans water mains citywide to make sure they're intact and to check on leaks. We are held to high standards by the state and federal governments as to what we can allow in the water supply (chemicals, odor, turbidity, etc.). We issue a Drinking Water Supply and Quality report every year [he distributed copies].

Batista: In the summer, when fire hydrants are running, there is discolored water in my building.

Simon requested a list of water main and sewer replacement projects planned for the CB 12 area. Ojar agreed to provide it.

Kach: We have a lot of underground streams, and the area once had a lot of industrial activity. Contaminated water could leak into pipes after mains are cut off.

Ojar: When we excavate, we don't find swampy water. The groundwater is very low, not where the pipes are. The physics are such that it's very hard for that to happen. I'll check on the relationship between groundwater and the pipes in WH-I. This situation has not come up before.

Simon: How many water sampling stations in WH-I?

Galarza promised to get the info. He distributed a map showing that there are four stations in the NW corner of Inwood between W. 214th-218th Streets. He said 1-3 samples are taken from these stations per week, the same number of samples from each station.

Ojar: We are not using any water from the Croton watershed now. [It used to supply 10% of the city's water.] We're waiting for the filtration plant in the Bronx to be completed in 2013. EPA backed off requiring that a roof be built over the Hillview Reservoir in Yonkers. All of our water is now coming from the Catskills/Delaware watershed. It does not have to be filtered because the city is complying with a filtration avoidance agreement it signed with the state in the 1990s to protect the watershed.

3. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Julio Batista, Director of Community Affairs, gave the report in Helen Morik's absence:

- NYPH is working with Community League of the Heights to create a Business Improvement District (BID) on Broadway from W. 155th – 179th Streets. The BID is funded through a property tax assessment. Even though NYPH and Columbia University Medical Center are exempt from property taxes as non-profit, charitable institutions, they will support the BID financially.
- He distributed a copy of a letter sent by Amy Friedman, Practice Administrator, Pediatric Psychiatry, to Commissioner Michael Hogan of the NYS Office of Mental Health concerning the fact that NYPH's loss of Clinic Plus funding from the state led to its decision to close five school-based mental health clinics as of June 30. [Commissioner Hogan wrote to Council Member Jackson, who supported CB 12's resolution calling for the continuation of this funding, that NYPH instead had lost a grant from the Robin Hood Foundation, which was not accurate.]
- The WIN (Washington Heights-Inwood Network) for Asthma program received a five-year \$950,000 grant from the NYS Dept. of Health to reduce ER visits by youngsters. The program monitors patients, provides support to families to eliminate household triggers and partners with community-based organizations. He offered to have the program make a presentation at a future committee meeting.
- NYPH is instituting a new community health outreach program based on videoconferencing between doctors and senior centers. They will do a pilot with live, interactive lectures.

Bing complained about a new telephone system for making appointments that his doctor at NYPH is using. Batista agreed to check into it.

4. **Isabella Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, amended her report last month: the state cut \$7.5 million in reimbursements to Isabella's nursing home going back to 2009. However, through a recalculation, the cuts were reduced to \$4.5 million. Isabella had to improve efficiencies but had to cut 40 positions in early February. 17 unfilled positions were eliminated, but 23 people were laid off. There are a total of 1200 employees in the nursing home and adult day care, and another 500 employees in home care...Isabella applied for a HEAL (Health Efficiency and Affordability Law) 21 grant for assisted living.
5. **Old Business** – S. Simon reported that he spoke again to the project manager at the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation regarding the long-awaited report on the remedial investigation conducted in the vicinity of the Brownfield at 4566 Broadway. The consultant submitted a final report two days ago that will be reviewed by DEC before it is made public. DEC is pushing for the site to be remediated sooner rather than later if the owner wants to get the maximum credits from the Brownfield Cleanup Program. DEC will probably order the owner of 4566 Broadway to monitor the air quality in the adjacent building at 4580 Broadway. The project manager said there is no hazard to the tenants since there is "a very low concentration [of pollutants], just above the acceptable limit," and it could easily decline. S. Simon said he would ask for more details.
6. **New Business** – S. Simon passed out a newspaper clipping about the NYC Health Department's latest public education campaign regarding the deleterious effects of smoking.

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – April 5, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (chair), James Amodeo, Helen Morik, Edgard Nau, Raybblin Vargas, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Isaiah Bing, David Kach, Elizabeth Lehmann.

GUESTS: Matthew Perzanowski, Dept. of Environmental Health Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University; Jasmine Burnett, Raising Women's Voices; Gisselle Mejia, City Harvest; Matthias Halabian.

S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.

1. **Report on the NYC Neighborhood Asthma and Allergy Study** – Matthew Perzanowski, PhD, Associate Professor of Environmental Health Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, the study's senior author, reported on its results, which were released last week:

- Asthma prevalence varies in different communities.
- Asthma comes from multiple sources, different triggers such as allergies.
- Asthma prevalence has increased around the world in last 40 years.
- 12% of Washington Heights-Inwood (WH-I) children 5 years of age have asthma.
- Study recruited kids through HIP health plan, middle-class families, 7-8-year-olds in four boroughs (all but Staten Island)
- Researchers went to 240 homes (4 in WH-I), collected air and dust samples, measured black carbon (soot) from diesel combustion.
- Children took breathing tests to measure exhaled nitric oxide, an indicator of lung inflammation.
- Study found that neighborhoods with a high rate of asthma have a higher % of African Americans, a higher % of people below the poverty level and most residents living in apartment buildings, which burn #4 and #6 oil, the dirtier types of fuel.
- A large number of WH-I buildings use #4 and #6 oil.
- Study concluded that increasing truck route density and buildings burning residual fuel oil results in a higher level of asthma.
- "We should think about asthma on a block-by-block basis."
- Even if you keep your windows closed, pollutants still come through – particles are very small.
- The city has a new law phasing out #4 and #6 oil.

The committee suggested that he disseminate his findings as widely as possible to community groups and encouraged him to report to the committee on any future research on this subject.

2. **The Need for a NY State Health Insurance Exchange** – Jasmine Burnett, Community Organizer, Raising Women's Voices – NY, gave a detailed and thorough Powerpoint presentation, "Addressing health disparities affecting women of color through NYS health reform," which included the following:

- In 2010, 45 million women across the U.S. reported that because of cost, they did not fill a prescription; skipped a recommended test, treatment of follow-up; did not go to the doctor when they had a medical problem or did not see a specialist when it was needed.
- Poor women are three times more likely than women in the highest income group to rate their overall health as fair or poor.
- According to 2009 data for women ages 18-64 in the nation, 39% of Hispanic women, 31% of American Indian/Alaskan Native women, 25% of African American women, 20% of Asian/Pacific Islander women and 15% of white women were uninsured.
- The uninsured rate in NY is below 20% for all groups. Hispanic and Asian women have the highest uninsured rate, as well as women 15-45 years of age.
- Millions of women will gain coverage through the national health care reform. As many as 27 million uninsured women between the ages of 19-64 are estimated to benefit:
 - 14 million women will gain Medicaid coverage
 - 8 million women who are now underinsured could gain subsidized private insurance
 - 5 million insured women will gain improved coverage or reduced premiums

- Health reform should reduce disparities in health coverage. In Massachusetts, lower-income women had a 9.4 percentage point gain in insurance coverage, from 85.1% in 2006 to 94.5% in 2009. Women of color who were insured went from 85.1% to 94.5% in that period. The numbers of women in both categories who visited a doctor increased significantly.
 - The NYS health insurance exchange should focus on reducing maternal/infant mortality and morbidity. NYS ranked 5th in the nation in maternal mortality between 2001-05. NYC's maternal mortality was twice the national rate. Still more NY women suffer serious complications during pregnancy and childbirth, often due to pre-existing conditions such as obesity, diabetes and hypertension. Women of color are disproportionately affected.
 - The Affordable Care Act (ACA), the federal health care reform law, relies on the states to:
 - Enroll people in an expanded Medicaid program
 - Enroll people in private insurance plans that will be made more affordable through subsidies
 - Select which plans will be offered to eligible people and small businesses
 - Conduct outreach and education to people who might be eligible for insurance
 - ACA expects states to create exchanges, run by a state agency, public authority or non-profit entity. The exchange is a marketplace where uninsured people and small businesses can find quality, affordable health coverage. It will pool the buying power of many people to get good deals from insurance companies. 24 states have already created exchanges.
 - A bill pending in Albany but held up in the State Senate would create a public authority run by a nine-member board appointed by the Governor and the State Legislature. Advocates have proposed a seven-member board, with three state officials and four members appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Legislature. They want the members to have expertise in public health or addressing health disparities and stronger conflict of interest rules.
 - ACA calls for the exchanges to be certified by the feds by January 2013, to begin eligibility screening and enrollment starting in fall 2013 and to be fully operational January 2014.
 - Because of the deadlock in the Legislature, the Governor is expected to issue an executive order tomorrow creating the exchange for NY State.
3. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Helen Morik, Vice President – Government & Community Affairs, reported as follows:
- NYPH received its seventh annual Energy Star rating for its efforts to reduce emissions.
 - A new letter is being drafted to the State Office of Mental Health clarifying the issue regarding the loss of funding for the school-based mental health clinics that are being closed.
 - A new center for the study of autism and brain development has been opened on the Westchester campus in White Plains. CDC reports that 1 out of 88 children has autism.
 - After a two-year-long effort, the school-based clinic at JFK High School was opened. It will serve 3,000 kids.
 - She invited the committee to visit the AIM clinic. Renovations are nearly completed.
 - The opening of the new children's ER freed up space for the adults' ER to expand. Old space will be renovated.
 - The CPEP psychiatric program is being moved to the old Medicaid office.
 - NYPH had a surplus this year – less than 1%.
4. **Harlem Hospital Report** – Raybblin Vargas: no report at this time.
5. **Isabella Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications, submitted a written report, which was read by S. Simon in her absence:

"As we reported in the March Health & Environment Committee meeting, Isabella sustained a loss totaling \$7.8 million (\$4.5 million for 2011 and \$3.3 million retroactive to 2009). The loss was based on new Medicaid reimbursement rates promulgated by the New York State Department of Health that were made retroactive to 2009. (By way of information, more than 85% of Isabella's revenue is derived from Medicaid.)

"To manage our operation in line with our revenue, we had to undertake a reduction in staff of some 40 jobs. This took place this past February.

"This past week we received some additional negative news from New York State. As of yesterday, April 4th, we received word that the rates we will receive for 2012 will reduce our revenue by another \$500,000 (on top of the \$4.5 million that we carry forward from last year). This loss will mean further challenges to us as we continue to provide quality care to our nursing home residents and community program clients. We will continue to seek efficiencies in our operations and do not plan any further staff reductions at this time. We will keep you posted."

6. **Old Business** – S. Simon reported that he spoke to the supervisor of the bureau at the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, who promised him that the report on the remedial investigation conducted in the vicinity of the brownfield at 4566 Broadway is almost completed and that we should have a copy by our next meeting. The supervisor said that none of the tenants in the surrounding buildings are in any jeopardy, although DEC will probably require some air monitoring in the adjacent building at 4580 Broadway in the heating season when vapors are more likely to seep through the building slab.
R. Vargas reported that the UFT, following up on a parent's recent claim that contaminated water at P.S. 173 has made children sick, found that there is no problem with the water in the school.
7. **New Business** – S. Simon distributed copies of a Daily News article reporting that WH-I has the highest rate of rate infestation in Manhattan (517 of 2,996 properties inspected in 2011 or 17.3% had signs of rat activity) and a report from DNAinfo that the recycling rate in WH-I has fallen to 12.7%. He said he wants to discuss these issues at a future meeting.
8. **Mail** – DEP issued a notice of intent to conduct an environmental review for its Green Infrastructure Program.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Simon

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – May 3, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (chair), James Amodeo, Isaiah Bing, David Kach, Elizabeth Lehmann, Helen Morik, Edgard Nau, Raybblin Vargas, Beatrice Hall (Public Member).

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dulce Bueno, Chris O'Sullivan.

GUESTS: Damian Sciano and Tricia Ryan, Con Edison; Rachel Futrell, Columbia University Medical Center; Martin Collins, Council Member Jackson's office; Michael Lifschutz, Rita Gorman.

S. Simon, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

1. **The condition of Con Edison's local distribution network and the status of the M29 transmission line and substation project** – Damian Sciano, Department Manager, Manhattan Electric Engineering, Con Edison, who is responsible for the distribution system throughout Manhattan, reported that the M29 transmission line project has been completed and has been operational for several months. The 9½-mile line is bringing 350 megawatts of lower cost upstate power to NYC. Con Ed's total capacity is 13,200 MW for NYC and Westchester. The load requirement for Washington Heights-Inwood is 186 MW. The substation on Academy Street also has been completed and is operating; it can be expanded.

Bing: Will you expand on the current site?

Sciano: Will get back to you. There is no plan for expansion in the next 10 years.

Simon: Has Academy Street, on the south side of the substation, been reopened? It had been closed to the public for decades.

Ryan: Will get back to you.

Bing: All the problems in our community are due to an antiquated distribution network: 100-year-old transformers, PILC (paper-insulated lead cables), gas lines from the 1880s.

Sciano: We've done a lot since the 1999 outage in Washington Heights-Inwood to improve the system. In 1999 there were 14 feeders in WH-I; now there are 20 feeders, more than any other network. In 1999, 45% of the network was made up of PILC cables; it's 15% today. Our goal is to have 0%. The average throughout the system is 17%. There are 350 transformers in WH-I. We changed 107 of them since 1999, adding 20-30 new ones for load growth. They are a couple of feet under the ground, covered by grates. They are safe – we all walk over them. We inspect them every five years and have sensors on them to read temperature, oil level, pressure. We installed two new transformers on Cabrini Boulevard & W. 187th St. within the last year. (There had been a blackout in that area.)

Collins: What was cause of the transformer fire on W. 217th St. in March?

Sciano: It wasn't a transformer fire; it was the conduit inside the service box. We have two particular concerns for the condition of the system: heavy salting during the winter corrodes cables and hot days during the summer [can overtax the system].....Every new building gets a service assessment, based on its square footage.

Morik: At what point in a new development is the assessment made?

Sciano: When architects are planning the building.

Simon: Have you reviewed the impact that the Quadriad project, with its high-rise towers, could have?

Sciano: It would only need 1 or 2 MW. Each feeder cable carries 5-25 MW. If service is inadequate in the area, we would build the infrastructure to provide service. We would find a way to connect them.

Lehmann: Isabella and Yeshiva Univ. have been looking into the possibility of having a high-pressure gas line installed. We were told it would have to come from Queens and would cost \$6M, which we would have to pay.

Ryan: Will look into it and get back to us.

2. **Columbia University Medical Center's environmental stewardship program** – Rachel Futrell, Associate Director, Energy Management & Sustainability, reported on CUMC's efforts to "reduce our demand on the grid."
 - CUMC developed an energy master plan three years ago in response to the Mayor's PlaNYC 2030 plan and set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2025.
 - In last couple of months, two major projects have been completed: 1) the HVAC systems in the Black building have been upgraded so that air flow and temperature are now controlled via a direct digital system. An electric signal is tied to a computer system. Proactive maintenance. Will result in 1% greenhouse gas reduction.
 - 2) A chilled water interconnect has been installed to serve four buildings that used to have their own chiller plants; now they use only one plant. It's more efficient, also allows for fuel switching (steam or electric). Will result in another 1% reduction.

- CUMC is making a concerted effort to design to sustainable standards. It received its first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification for the renovation of three floors of the Allan Rosenfield building (11th, 12th and 13th floors) for the Environmental Health department in the School of Public Health. Recycled-content furniture, daylighting controls and water-saving fixtures were included. More than 90% of the demolition and construction material were recycled.
 - We are incorporating LEED principles in our everyday construction projects.
 - A dual-fuel conversion (gas and #2 oil) is planned for the boiler plant at 100 Haven Ave., which serves the three towers and 50 Haven Ave. #6 oil would be eliminated; this is the only place on campus that uses #6. This will result in a 9% greenhouse gas emission. Weighing options on a firm commitment for gas service or interruptible service. Project is in design now; construction will begin this summer and be completed the following summer.
 - She meets with NYPH energy program manager biweekly to coordinate efforts.
3. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Helen Morik, Vice President – Government & Community Affairs, reported on the closing of the city's Medicaid office inside the hospital emergency room area: HRA cut back on the office three years ago, leaving only a skeleton staff. It hasn't been running efficiently and hasn't been as busy as it was before. NYPH still has its own Medicaid office, helping patients fill out applications. HRA will assign social workers and volunteers to the office during the transition. The Psychiatric ER will be moved to this private area; it's not in an appropriate area since psych patients are mixed in with other patients. The ER will be expanded to include the space occupied by the old children's ER and the psych area.
- Had a very nice breakfast introducing the new CEO Steve Corwin, who has been here since the early '80s, to community leaders
 - Converting the WH campus to gas and #2 oil by end of year. Already burn gas and #2 oil at other campuses.
4. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications reported "status quo for the moment." Federal and state agencies are doing audits checking on use of Medicaid \$ -- "takes up a lot of manpower and time."
- New enrollees in long-term care are being moved to managed care after 120 days; effective date has been delayed until July 2. "Managed care companies don't know what they're doing."
 - Isabella has a benefits enrollment office in a storefront on St. Nicholas Avenue between W. 169th & W. 170th Streets. Service is available to the community.
 - Together on Diabetes, a community program to help WH-I seniors with diabetes live better, is being launched on May 15 at Isabella. The program is sponsored by the United Hospital Fund in partnership with the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation and includes CBOs, providers and city agencies.
5. **Harlem Hospital Report** – Raybblin Vargas reported that a new chair of the Harlem Hospital Community Advisory Board is being elected. She plans to attend the May 19 meeting and will report on it at our next meeting.
6. **Old Business** – S. Simon reported that CB 12 has finally received two thick documents with the findings of the remedial investigation conducted in the vicinity of the brownfield site at 4566 Broadway. The accompanying fact sheet states: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation "is reviewing a report that recommends cleanup action at the site...Based on the findings of the investigation, NYSDEC, in consultation with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), has determined that the site's significant threat status has not yet been determined." He said he would request clarification from NYSDEC on this statement since he had been previously assured that none of the tenants in the surrounding buildings are in any jeopardy. He will see whether the School of Public Health can assist us in reviewing these documents.
7. **New Business** – The committee reviewed a resolution referred to us by the Youth & Education Committee in support of the "Healthy Food, Healthy Community" school-food program proposed by the Community Health Academy of the Heights for its new facility on West 158th Street starting in September 2013. It was agreed that we needed additional information and should request that a representative come to our June meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – June 7, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Simon (chair), James Amodeo, David Kach, Elizabeth Lehmann, Edgard Nau, Raybblin Vargas

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Isaiah Bing, Helen Morik, Beatrice Hall (Public Member)

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dulce Bueno

GUESTS: Robert Corrigan, NYC Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene; Mark House, Community Health Academy of the Heights; Gisselle Mejia, City Harvest; Mav Moorhead, NYH2O; Amanda Moses, Daily News

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

1. The Health Department's plan for reducing the high rate of rat infestation in Washington Heights-Inwood
-- Robert Corrigan, Senior Research Scientist – Rodentologist, NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

The Daily News recently reported that Community District 12 has the highest rate of rat infestation in Manhattan. Evidence of the presence of rats was found in 17% of the properties inspected. Dr. Corrigan reported that the Health Department has selected CD 12 as an Urgent Action Required (UAR) area where it will utilize "an area-wide rat population reduction strategy," which includes an area sanitation analysis to determine the rats' food sources; inter-agency collaboration including Sanitation, Health, Environmental Protection, Parks, MTA, Housing Authority, etc. (depending on specific neighborhood's infestation profile), and area rodent population surveillance. Inspectors are going street-by-street looking for conditions that attract rats and where the population is heaviest. This task, called "indexing," will take several months. When inspectors find rat issues, they reach out to the property owner within a day or two. A 5-day letter is sent to the owner. The inspector returns to see if the condition has been corrected. If not, a violation is issued. Dr. Corrigan also said:

- The reproductive peaks for rats are the spring and fall. Winter normally helps to reduce the population, but the mild winter has caused an "early explosion... rats are blooming all over Manhattan."
- 60 lbs. of food waste can feed 1,000 rats
- Baiting alone is not sufficient. You have to address the rats' food source. When you eliminate food, you induce tremendous stress on rats. A lot of them die. They'll turn on each other and kill each other and/or disperse to other areas.
- Rats are not becoming more brazen. They are getting larger. Maximum size is 1½ lbs.
- It is unclear whether mint-treated garbage bags are effective. "We have no sound science."
- There is only one species of rat in NYC: the Norway rat.
- Rat problems in parks caused to a great extent by people who feed the birds.

Dr. Corrigan said that DOH has a team working with CB 12 as part of the UAR strategy. It was agreed that CB 12 would organize four community meetings to educate building owners, managers and superintendents about how to deal with this problem and prevent rat infestations. The district manager, Ebenezer Smith, came to the meeting briefly. He said that only one meeting had been arranged so far at the Inwood branch library but that it had been cancelled because no one signed up on the sheet left at the library. He said he was having difficulty finding sites for the other meetings. S. Simon noted that better community outreach needed to be done and that this should be a top priority for CB 12. He suggested that realty and other housing organizations be contacted.

2. Resolution on "Healthy Food, Healthy Community" School-Food Program – Mark House, Principal, Community Health Academy of the Heights, spoke about his school and the program he would like to initiate.
The new building on W. 158th Street should be completed in January. The school is now located in two annexes on W. 182nd and W. 183rd Streets. It is a public school (not a charter school) with grades 6-12, was conceived by the Community League of the Heights (CLOTH) and is supported by the Columbia University Medical Center and NY-Presbyterian Hospital. It has been in existence for six years and will have its first graduating class this year. When it comes to school food, "we have a disconnect between discussions in the classroom about healthy eating and then we send our kids down to the cafeteria. I wouldn't feed that food to my kid, but yet I'm feeding it to 520 kids who are also my kids." He is asking CB 12 for "a show of support" to convince the Dept. of Education that "we should do something different." He wants three things: 1) Access to the kitchen to have kids learn how to prepare nutritious meals. Under the current policy, he can only use the kitchen after 6:00 and must pay \$125/hour for a minimum of two hours. He wants use of it after 3:00, when he says no one is there and kids will be able to stay after school. 2) Permission to bring produce into the school that has been grown in the

school's own community garden on W. 157th Street. 3) A pilot project for 1-2 years in which the school would hire its own kitchen staff and purchase its own food outside DOE's regular system, just as charter schools do. He would pay a chef and two assistants. He said Chancellor Dennis Walcott thinks it's a good idea, but there are union issues regarding the use of the kitchen by the regular staff.

Amodeo moved that the committee approve the draft resolution; seconded by Vargas. The resolution was passed by the following vote: Committee Members 6-0-0-0, Board Members 0-0-0-1 (not voting) and Members of the Public 2-0-1-0.

3. **NY-Presbyterian Hospital Report** – Helen Morik, Vice President – Government & Community Affairs, dropped off a report at the beginning of the meeting that was read aloud by S. Simon: "We met with representatives of our elected officials last week to discuss the expanded Emergency Dept. plans, the closing of the Medicaid office and the resources available for those wanting to enroll in Medicaid. We agreed that we would make information available regarding enrollment in Medicaid and that a community health worker will remain at the site for awhile to help those who may come for assistance. There will also be a large poster at the site telling patients/residents that flyers with information are available at all our security desks and our ACN sites." She attached a draft copy of the flyer and a letter signed by Andria Castellanos, Senior Vice President, Operations, regarding the expansion of the ED and the closing of the Medicaid office as of June 29. She also reported that a one-story building is being built in the garden at the Allen Hospital for new operating rooms and an MRI. A terrace will be built on top of this building for patients, visitors and staff.
4. **Isabella Geriatric Center Report** – Betty Lehmann, Director of Marketing & Communications reported "good news:" there were five simultaneous audits by Federal and state agencies on Isabella's use of Medicaid \$ last month, now there are four. The 2012 reimbursement rates have yet to be set. Home care and adult day care programs are changing rapidly. Clients have to be enrolled in Medicaid managed care if they are over 18 and receiving long-term care (over 180 days).
5. **Harlem Hospital Report** – Raybblin Vargas reported that she attended the Harlem Hospital Community Advisory Board annual meeting on June 2. The hospital is actively pursuing a campaign against gun violence; working with the Mission Society to send "interrupters" (usually former gang members) to go to the scene of a shooting or stabbing to prevent retaliation. Social workers are assigned to cases. There have been 254 shootings or stabbings since January and no retaliations. She distributed a packet from the hospital's executive director. US News & World Report called Harlem Hospital the 23rd worst in the nation, but this was based on 5-year-old information. It recently won a "leapfrog" award as the most improved hospital.
6. **Old Business** – S. Simon reported that he is reaching out to the School of Public Health for assistance in reviewing the reports on the findings of the remedial investigation conducted in the vicinity of the brownfield site at 4566 Broadway at Nagle Avenue. R. Vargas distributed an update on the N.Y. State Insurance Exchange.
7. **New Business** – Mav Moorhead from NYCH2O spoke in great detail in opposition to a plan by Spectra to build a high-pressure, high-volume gas line from Bayonne, N.J. to Staten Island and Manhattan, running from Gansevoort Street several blocks north to a Con Ed facility at West 15th Street. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the application on May 21. She said an EIS was not done and that 80% of the natural gas is for export to Europe and China, only 20% for the Con Ed service area. Cost is \$860 million. "While gas burns more cleanly than oil, the extraction process is dirty...it's the wrong answer." She said most of the gas is coming from the Marcellus shale, which extends into upstate NY, and that the main problem is radiation from the gas that will cause lung cancer. Her group is raising \$ for a lawsuit and is asking community boards around the city to pass resolutions calling upon Spectra to do a health impact study and to sign a letter to Council Speaker Quinn requesting a City Council hearing. The committee members agreed they needed time to study the issue and review the documents Ms. Moorhead left with us. Also, the committee cannot sign a letter on its own.
8. **Announcements** – A rally in support of proposed Health Code regulation restricting sale of large quantities of sugary beverages will be held at City Hall on Monday, June 11. R. Vargas said she would attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Steve Simon