

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING
Office of Management Analysis and Planning
Summary of Manhattan Hearing
October 27, 2008

GENERAL INFORMATION

Number Attending: 61

On Podium: Edwin Méndez-Santiago, Commissioner
Jorge Romero, Assistant Commissioner
Janice Chu, Deputy Assistant Commissioner
Karen Taylor, Senior Director, Bureau of Senior Centers
Ramona Massena, Budgets
Sue Chandler, Member, DFTA Advisory Council
Mary Mayer, Member, DFTA Advisory Council
Doris Williams, Member, DFTA Advisory Council

Number Testifying: 35 speakers, 10 of whom did not submit written testimony, 5 of whom submitted written testimony but did not speak.

SUMMARY OF TOPIC AREAS (Speaker list attached)

DFTA SERVICES/SERVICE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY

DFTA Modernization Plan

Speakers expressed their lack of support or concerns about DFTA's modernization and restructuring efforts.

Senior Center RFP concerns

Many speakers expressed the concern that senior centers will close, especially those centers in NYCHA facilities. Some asked DFTA to delay the release of the RFP.

(1, 3, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 30, 31, 32, 35)

Senior Center RFP questions and suggestions

One speaker asked if DFTA will be providing resources to assist proposers with grant writing. Another speaker asked why seniors were not more involved in RFP discussions, and wanted DFTA to better enforce the voluntary donation regulation at senior centers. A third speaker wanted to know whether a pilot project for senior center restructuring was conducted.

Speakers also made various suggestions regarding what they wanted to see in the RFP, including: greater inclusion of the LGBT community; diversity and accessibility; traveling to seniors rather than having seniors come to centers, and the recruitment of more volunteer nurses; federal government funding and oversight, as well as a celebrity "adopt-a-senior center" campaign; out of the box initiatives and volunteerism; a phone

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number posted at every senior center that participants can call if there is a problem; and no financial penalties related to performance measures in the first year of senior center contracts.

(1, 6, 16, 21, 9, 14, 17, 25, 28, 29)

Case Management and Home Delivered Meals

Two speakers expressed concern that 3,500 case management clients may have been undercounted and that there are waiting lists for case management services. One of these speakers also stated that there are not enough case managers, and the other expressed concern about waiting lists for home delivered meals. Two speakers did not like frozen meals because seniors lose daily contact and one expressed concern about meal quality. Three speakers wanted greater outreach and assistance to homebound elderly to prevent social isolation, and one of these speakers wanted to ensure the continuance of the home delivered meals program. One speaker asked that DFTA suspend the home delivered meals contract awards until issues with the new case management contracts are dealt with. One speaker wanted seniors assigned to trained case managers, health professionals, and DFTA staff who specialize in their unique needs.

(2, 3, 12, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31)

Recommendations for DFTA:

- DFTA delay the release of the senior center RFP.
- DFTA provide resources to assist proposers with grant writing.
- DFTA increase vigilance in the enforcement of voluntary donation regulation at senior centers.
- DFTA conduct a pilot project for senior center restructuring.
- DFTA include considerations for the LGBT community, diversity, accessibility, home visitation, volunteer nurses, federal funding and oversight, celebrity “adopt-a-senior” program, and volunteerism into the RFP.
- DFTA delay financial penalties related to performance measures for the first year of the new senior center contracts.

Fiscal

Some speakers asked whether they would be expected to provide the same level of service with less funding available. Speakers also expressed their concerns regarding budget cuts to senior programming (28, 30), and expressed the need for increased funding. Two speakers asked that Borough President discretionary funds be restored back to the Borough Presidents.

(1, 3, 5, 8, 20, 26, 28, 30, 31)

Recommendations for DFTA:

- DFTA increase funding for programs.
- DFTA restore Borough President Discretionary Funding

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Other

311

One speaker asked that 311 be made more senior and immigrant friendly, and wanted a separate social service-specific telephone and web-based system. Another speaker wanted 311's development to remain transparent to all providers.

(2, 13)

Affordable Housing

Two speakers cited the need for more affordable housing and legal services, and one requested an increase in the SCRIE income eligibility level.

(23, 31)

Caregiver Programs

One speaker shared their best practices for their culturally competent caregiver programs, and another wanted increased caregiver engagement.

(2, 34)

Home Attendants

One speaker emphasized the importance of greater background checks on Home Attendants due to incidents of theft.

(33)

Intergenerational Programs

Two speakers called for the expansion of intergenerational programs.

(2, 4)

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

One speaker brought up a number of issues of concern for the blind and visually impaired, including asking DFTA for: an ongoing commitment to the NYC Coalition on Aging and Vision, as well as the creation of an on-going resource center; assistance with access to benefits, outreach, and inclusion of the blind and visually impaired community; and the installation of audible pedestrian signals and modification of "quiet cars," in cooperation with the NYCDOT.

(5)

Technology

One speaker requested that DFTA provide financial support for seniors to purchase computers. Another speaker encouraged DFTA to support the use of technology for emergencies and health care, including

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disease prevention and wellness. A third speaker stated that the Provider Data System (PDS) does not work and that a new system needs to be utilized.

(8, 13, 26)

Workforce Development

Three speakers called for greater workforce development; one wanted emphasis placed on cultural competency and supported the ReServe program. Another speaker had an issue with a staff member of DFTA's senior employment program.

(5, 13, 22, 29)

General Suggestions

- Greater community involvement, Braille translation of DFTA materials, and clearer distinctions between different types of seniors and their needs (2)
- An increased role for older adults on DFTA's Senior Advisory Council, more information on frozen home delivered meals research, and greater oversight of DFTA budgets (6);
- Increased collaboration with nonprofit providers and those who serve the disabled regarding advocacy, information sharing and public attitudes (7);
- Greater integration of the long-term care system and the importance of nursing homes (11); and
- Greater exploration of NORC programming. (29)

Recommendations for DFTA:

- DFTA work to make 311 more senior and immigrant friendly.
- DFTA increase SCRIE income eligibility requirement and increase funding for affordable housing.
- DFTA increase caregiver engagement.
- DFTA increase requirements for background checks for Home Attendants.
- DFTA expand intergenerational programs.
- DFTA commit to an ongoing resource center for the blind and visually impaired.
- DFTA provide financial support for technological services for seniors and senior services.
- DFTA begin using a new provider data system.
- DFTA increase quality programming for workforce development.

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SPEAKERS

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|-------------------------------|---|
| 1) Scott Stringer | Manhattan Borough President* |
| 2) Aaron Kesselman | Manhattan Borough-Wide Interagency Council on Aging (MBIAC) |
| 3) Bethany Jankunis | Chief of Staff for Assembly member Deborah J. Glick |
| 4) Elizabeth Lee | Intergenerational Volunteer and Community Coordinator, VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired |
| 5) Antoinette M. Emers | Assistant Director of Community Outreach, VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired |
| 6) Thomas Connor | Caring Community |
| 7) Linda Ostreicher | Director of Public Policy, Center for Independence of the Disabled of New York (CIDNY) |
| 8) Eric Wallace | Nutrition Coordinator, Canaan Senior Service Center |
| 9) Rob Lorey | Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders (SAGE) |
| 10) Alonzo Jordan | Office of State Senator Malcolm Smith |
| 11) Karlin Mbah | Friends and Relatives of the Institutionalized Aged (FRIA) |
| 12) Cynthia Maurer | Executive Director, Visiting Neighbors |
| 13) Laura Radensky | Community Liaison, Jewish Home Lifecare |
| 14) Gerard Petite | Manhattan Borough President's Senior Advisory Group |
| 15) David Gillcrist | Executive Director, Project FIND |
| 16) Tim Ettenheim | Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center |
| 17) Vaylateena Jones | Manhattan Community Board 3* |
| 18) Joel Kaplan | Executive Director, United Jewish Council of the East Side* |

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19) Jane Barry Executive Director, Stein Senior Center

20) Clare Dockery senior*

SPEAKERS cont.

21) Madge Rosenberg Manhattan Community Board 7*

22) Fern Hertzberg Executive Director, ARC XVI Fort Washington, Inc.

23) Jean-Daniel Noland Manhattan Community Board 4*

24) Keen Berger Manhattan Community Board 2

25) Alice F. La Brie senior

26) Bobbie Sackman Director, Public Policy, Council of Senior Centers & Services of NYC, Inc.*

27) Po Ling Ng Chinese American Planning Council*

28) Andrew Martin DOROT*

29) Joyce Brown senior*

30) Ellen Polivy Manhattan Community Board 8

* Speakers who did not submit testimony.

Submitted Testimony Only:

31) Susan Stetzer Manhattan Community Board 3

32) John H. Velez Program Coordinator, Washington Heights Community Services, Inc.

33) Doris Williams DFTA Advisory Council

34) Amy Chalfy Director of Programs, JASA

35) Christopher Mielowski and Salwa Zaki Pastor and Director (respectively), Community Lounge for Senior Citizens

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