



The City of New York
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

3024 THIRD AVENUE
BRONX, NEW YORK 10455
(718) 585-7117 • Fax (718) 292-0558 • Email: bx01@cb.nyc.gov

Serving and Representing: Port Morris, Mott Haven and Melrose



VANESSA L. GIBSON
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTHONY R. JORDAN
DISTRICT MANAGER

CLARISA M. ALAYETO
CHAIRPERSON

Health & Human Services Committee Minutes

March 19th, 2024

Marilyn Peña, Chairperson

Outline

Mental health support in the South Bronx.

- Julius Robbins, executive director of an AthenaPsych clinic in the South Bronx, discusses serving over 5,300 individuals on Medicaid last year.

Mental health services in the South Bronx.

- Julius Robbins highlights the success of the clinic in reducing wait times, with no waitlist since opening in 2020 and access to treatment in 1-7 days.
- The clinic has a 94.5% retention rate for all staff, including administrators.
- A survey of patients found that 89.6% would use a mental wellness app, with 98% having a cell phone and 96.5% reporting good or excellent internet connectivity.
- Julius Robbins notes the injustice of mobile mental health service apps operating in New York State, with many unable to afford services, and highlights the need for a mobile app for the South Bronx community.

Developing a mental health app for New Yorkers.

- Julius Robbins explains that the new mental health app aims to provide more access to care for the South Bronx Community, particularly for minors, through a user-friendly platform offering various mental health services.
- The app will allow users to track their mental health goals and progress, receive text messages from their care providers, and access psycho educational resources.
- The app's core function is to provide mental health services through the app, including therapy and medication management, and users can expect to see their mental health scores improve over time.

Telehealth app for mental health services.

- 30% of caseload is under 18, with most technology literate aged 23-38.

LGBTQ+ mental health services and demographics.

- The clinic's Clinical Director, Dr. Ryan, is an LGBTQ+ individual who provides trainings to all clinicians.
- The clinic's catchment area is primarily the Bronx, with 90% of patients coming from that area in 2023.

Healthcare resources for underserved communities.

- Bronx clinic prioritizes Medicaid patients, provides resources for private insurance seekers.

Mental health services and app development.

- Julius Robbins mentions that the facility doesn't push everyone towards medication, instead, they prioritize holistic approaches to mental health.
- Approximately 20% of their caseload has co-occurring substance use disorders, and they partner with Montefiore and New York Presbyterian for rapid intakes.
- The facility is licensed by the NYS Office of Mental Health and wants to provide integrated substance use treatment, but current state regulations prohibit it.
- They are seeking a letter of support for their grant application to the state to help fund their app development, with a potential \$600 million in funding available for Health IT and telehealth transformation.

Mental health software development and retention.

- Julius Robbins discusses the importance of retaining talent in mental health care, citing a 13.5-year employee as an example.
- The speaker mentions a \$2.4 million grant for telehealth transformation and the company's software platform, which has helped 1000s more patients without less powerful software.

Board member attendance and committee assignments.

- Chairperson: Important to support a letter due to quorum issues, discuss backup person for executive meetings.
- Chairperson: Committee will review attendance, excused absences, and processes for unexcused absences.

Health and Human Services issues in a city district.

- Committee members are encouraged to bring forth action items to address these issues and prioritize them for discussion and possible action.

Mental health support for youth in urban areas.

- District Manager Anthony Jordan discussed action items related to mental health for youth, including inviting a speaker to discuss social prescribing and its potential to reduce anxiety.

Sanitation and environmental justice in a NYC community board meeting.

- Anthony Jordan discusses meeting with NYC Deputy Chief of Department Sanitation. Specifically, to address sanitation concerns in the Bronx.
- Julius Robbins plans to invite other organizations to provide additional services at the office to reach the community more effectively.

Action Items

Provide statistics on the demographics (race, LGBTQ+, etc.) of Athena Health's staff.

Follow up with VNS representative Joanne H Tate about mental health and substance abuse outreach when she returns next month.

Invite Department of Sanitation deputy chief to provide details on garbage cleanup schedule and processes at upcoming board meeting on 2/26.

Coordinate having other organizations that provide community services take up desks/workstations at the CB1 office (To be approved by District Manager & Full Board Chair)

Have community members sign up on email list to receive updates on services and resources available.

Develop list of priority issues and potential speakers/presenters for the Health and Human Services committee to consider.

Refer to committee on bylaws for recommendations on attendance policies and vice chair roles.

Letter of Support for AthenaPsych