



Donovan Richards
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Danielle Brecker
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

November 13th, 2023

Health and Human Services and Education Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Attendees:

Lauren Springer, Chair
Amparo Abel-Bey
Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos
Warren Davis
Nellie Afshar
Danielle Brecker

Absentees:

Kelly Craig
John Bahia
Phuntsok Tashi
Tom Mituzas
Leticia Vasquez
Benjamin Lucas

Atanu Majumdar – Public Member

Public Members

Andrea Thomas, Sunnyside Community Services
Julie Chou

Guest

Debbie Farley
Sue Ellen Dodell
Marlene Lorraine
Ellen Rieser
Alan Ross
Priscilla Prostowich
Ana Sanchez
Monique Michael
Camille Dee
Sabrina DeGuzman Simmons, Aetna Account Director
Nancy Parmet-Stitham
Terry Delis
Ruth Greenfield Masyr
Esmeralda Serrano, MD
Tracy Pingalore
Ellen DiMitre
William Terry

“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”

Harriet Shalat
Douglas Melzer
Linda Sern
Ann Maire Belluna-Tozzi

Community Board 2 Staff

Maryann Gurrado, Community Board 2

Lauren Springer, Chair Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Task Force Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Lauren Springer stated that there will be two presentations. The first one will be a presentation of the Aetna Medicare Advantage Program.

Lauren Springer introduced Sabrina DeGuzman Simmons.

- Sabrina DeGuzman Simmons is the Aetna Account Director.
- This is an informational meeting with respect to Aetna Medicare Advantage Program for NYC retirees.
- A presentation was shown explaining the traditional medicare plan and how the Aetna Medicare Advantage plan works and the differences.
- The Medicare Advantage plans will cover all Medicare-approved services.
- The Medicare Advantage plan is federally contracted.
- Aetna Medicare Advantage PPO Plan. PPO stands for a Preferred Provider Organization.
- PPO plans allow members to see providers in or out of network.
- No referrals are required to see a specialist with the Aetna plan.
- Members of the Aetna Plan can keep seeing their providers.
- Retirees can see any medicare-approved provider who is willing to accept the plan.
- The Aetna Plan covers retirees nationally and internationally when travelling.
- All Part D drugs are covered.

Dr. Esmeralda Serrano discussed prior authorizations.

- Most prior authorizations have been removed under the Aetna Plan.
- Every two years the prior authorization list will be reviewed.

The meeting was opened to questions and discussion about the Aetna Plan.

- A retired hospital CEO asked a question. His question was, what is the denial rate for acute inpatient rehab? The Aetna team did not have an answer. They would have to look into their data. The cost of acute inpatient rehab is an expensive admission. Aetna shows a high denial rate for this admission. These are the admissions that really count.

- The second question was, What percentage of denials are overturned on appeal? The team did not have the answer at the moment. The retired CEO stated 90% are overturned on appeal but only 20% are actually appealed because the appeal process is so complex that retirees would not even bother to go through the process.

Lauren Springer mentioned that at the last Health & Human Services Committee meeting the committee recommended that Intro Bill 1099 be voted on by the full CB2 Board members. The resolution will be sent out to the full board members to review it before the next CB2 board meeting. There might be a public meeting on this issue.

Lauren Springer introduced Julie Chou to discuss the Public Bathroom Bill updates.

- Julie Chou will be providing an update on public bathrooms.
- Six bathroom bills have been introduced since the beginning of last year 2022.
- Three were proposed this summer 2023.
- Julie Chou will be discussing Intro 1076, Intro 1077 and Intro 1154 at this meeting.
- Intro 1076 and Intro 1077, one of these bills would require the city to open 88 accessible bathrooms in public owned buildings across the city. Bathrooms that are on public property and paid for by taxpayers should be open to the public.
- Intro 1077 would require the City to develop a capital funding plan for the bathrooms that were identified in each zip code. This Bill is related to local law 1114 which was passed last year.
- Intro 1154 would like to propose 4000 public bathrooms by 2035. The city currently has 1100 public bathrooms.
- The design of public bathrooms and maintenance is very important to make it successful and not a nuisance to our society.
- Bathrooms in municipal buildings can create an additional 1243 public bathrooms for the city. These bathrooms are existing already and wouldn't cost the taxpayers if they were open and readily available.
- The Public Bathroom Working Group is asking if developers provide over 10,000 sq. feet. of public open space, that they provide access to bathrooms in their commercial buildings.
- The Public Bathroom Working Group has also proposed that restaurants participating in the Open Restaurants program open their bathrooms for using their public realm.
- The city has 13000 restaurants participating in the Open Restaurants program. About 2000 of them use 800 sq. ft. of public realm space.
- There are currently 1,700 city parks only 662 of them have bathrooms.
- Beyond the three Automated Public Toilets (APTs) currently located on DOT plazas, an additional 85 DOT plazas and 38 DOT parking lots are candidates for bathroom facilities.
- Julie Chou shared how these are ways of expanding access public bathrooms.
- Julie Chou stated that the councilmember and Manhattan Borough President would appreciate support from the community boards whether it's either a letter of support or a resolution to Speaker Adams and get these bills presented at committee hearings. Julie Chou asked if the Health Committee would be interested in supporting that.

- A committee member asked about signage and location access to the bathrooms.
 - Julie Chou suggested in the letter of support or resolution to include these suggestions about the importance of signage and location access of the bathrooms. Julie Chou stated that she is on CB 5 in Manhattan and made a resolution which supported all three bills and included multiple suggestions.
- A question was asked about changing tables in the public restrooms.
- All the bills reset once the New Year starts.
- A resolution would be needed by the end of this year.

The Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee are in favor of supporting these bills.

Lauren Springer thanked everyone for an engaging meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kim Waber