

2019 Annual Public Meeting Responses

**Board of Directors Meeting
July 25, 2019
Dr. Mitchell Katz**



2019 Annual Public Meetings

In accordance with §7384(10) of the HHC Enabling Act the Board of Directors of the New York City Health + Hospitals facilitated the Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Public Meetings in all five boroughs of NYC:

- Manhattan - April 2, 2019 at Gouverneur
- Bronx - April 30, 2019 at Jacobi
- Queens - May 7, 2019 at Elmhurst Hospital
- Staten Island - June 11, 2019 at Sea View
- Brooklyn - June 18, 2019 at Woodhull

The President and CEO informed the public on the programs and plans of the NYC Health + Hospitals, as well as afforded the public an opportunity to present oral and or written testimony concerning the NYC H+H performance to the Board of Directors.



Summary of Issues Raised

- Nurse staffing, retention, and governance
- Access challenges – specialty staffing, appointment wait times, call center performance
- Promoting safe and supportive work environments
- Express Care
- Investments in services and new programs
- Capital and infrastructure improvements
- Support staff levels
- Epic, translation line, and other technology



Nurse Staffing, Retention, and Governance

- We agree with speakers that nurses are a critical component of our care teams, and we have hired hundreds of nurses this past year.
- We have 340 more nurses working at H+H than one year ago, and this is net growth, accounting for people retiring and leaving the system.
- Many of these nurses are still in training and orientation however, the new staffing is being felt across the system.
- Whenever possible, we start to train a new nurse before a departing nurse officially leaves so there is no gap in staff coverage.



Nurse Staffing, Retention, and Governance (continued)

- We are also working with the City and NYSNA to expedite our onboarding process, which in many instances is too long.
- To assist in our nurse recruitment and retention efforts, we have launched Nurses4NYC, and are participating in the first City-led nurse residency program.
- Immediately following the Bronx public meeting, Dr. Katz and Jacobi leadership went to the Jacobi ER due to concerns raised by the nurses about staffing. The visit confirmed the great work our nurses do and the importance of the steps we are taking to address the issues they have raised.
- We always want safe staffing of nurses in our facilities.



Access challenges: specialty staffing, appointment wait times, call center performance

- We agree with speakers that improving access to primary care and needed specialty care are critical priorities for the system
- The wait-time for a new primary-care visit at a H+H facility is now generally within one to two weeks
- While patients needing a specialist urgently can be seen quickly, wait-times to see certain specialists at some H+H hospitals can be too long. These wait-times can vary significantly based on the facility.
- H+H's eConsult platform allows primary care physicians to send an electronic referral directly to a specialty clinic. It allows for faster and easier access to outpatient specialty expertise. Currently, eConsult is live in over 100 clinics across ten facilities, including adult medicine and surgical subspecialties, behavioral health, and pediatric subspecialties.
- Over 10,000 referrals per month are managed by eConsult clinics, which is up from 2,300 per month in 29 clinics in January 2018. And our average review and response time is under three days.
- For a set of 14 specialty clinics using eConsult for over a year, the system saw a 23% reduction in overall wait-time for new patient visits.
- We continue to assess our patients' needs and are working on business plans to hire new clinical staff, including specialists. We are eager for input from the community on what services are most important to them.



Access challenges: specialty staffing, appointment wait times, call center performance (continued)

- There is currently a single phone number for patients to call to make appointments at any of our sites: **1-844-NYC-4-NYC**. This replaces over a dozen phone numbers that were in circulation. Steps we are taking to improve the call center include:
 - Right-sized staffing to get 80% of calls answered in under 20 seconds.
 - Adding more self-service through technology, such as self-scheduling, texting with patients for appointments and clinical issues.
 - Embedding nurse practitioners in the call center to do medication renewals by phone.
 - Embedding a "care team contact" in each outpatient practice to be the point of escalation and quarterback for clinical questions.



- Our health system is striving to live by a core set of values known as iCARE – Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Excellence.
- We believe in encouraging people to raise concerns and we want to be open to improving our system and eliminating challenges our staff may face.
- Responses to some of the specific issues raised:
 - The panic buttons at the Myer clinic are now frequently tested. We have constructed see-through windows in the lobby, installed video monitoring equipment, and are awaiting delivery of mirrors for the hallways.
 - We have also authorized Behavioral Health Associates (BHA) positions in the clinic to help with the de-escalation of patients; we have improved partnership with onsite security and provided shuttle service for staff at the Myer clinic
 - We are evaluating the request to place credentials (MD, RN) on identification badges
 - While we cannot publicly comment on some of the specific employee allegations raised, we take all allegations seriously and work hard to investigate and respond appropriately
 - Similarly, we cannot publicly comment on individual leave, promotion or hiring decisions but we strive to have fair and transparent processes to support our staff.



Express Care

- ExpressCare offers walk-in services for a range of non-life threatening conditions like colds, flu, sprains, skin rashes, minor cuts and lacerations, and certain types of infections.
- We also offer diagnostic imaging like CT scans and EKGs, full laboratory services and point-of-care testing for blood glucose, pregnancy, strep and rapid HIV tests.
- Two ExpressCare clinics have opened already – one at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst in Queens, the other at NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln in the Bronx.
- We are very pleased with the community response to these clinics and are eager to offer ExpressCare at more locations.
- We expect to open Jacobi Medical Center, Gouverneur and several other locations in the near future.



Investments In Services and New Programs

- Several speakers spoke about the need for investments in new or expanded services across our facilities.
 - System-wide, H+H is hiring more primary care clinicians through our recruitment campaign DOCS4NYC, which launched in May 2018.
 - Of the campaign's 75 targeted new hires, 40 primary care providers have been hired and we will add more for NYC Care.
 - We are opening three new one-stop-shop community health centers in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn in 2021.
 - We have developed a business planning process to invest in new services that will help serve unmet demand and improve the system's finances.
 - The increasing partnership between Jacobi and NCB is a key pathway to grow services at NCB. Physicians can practice across both facilities and wait-times for specialty care or procedures at Jacobi are expected to be significantly less at NCB.
 - Health + Hospitals values our partnership with communities when planning new patient care services. Through our 21 Community Advisory Boards (CABs), with more than 320 CAB members system-wide, and our recently completed Community Health Needs Assessment, we receive helpful suggestions from patients and local advocates. Many of these suggestions, such as the ExpressCare at Gouverneur, become a part of our strategy.



Capital and Infrastructure Improvements

- Several speakers commented on the need for improvements to H+H facility infrastructure and other potential capital projects:
 - It is true that many of our hospitals were built many decades ago and we have significant capital improvement needs.
 - We are currently reviewing all of the facilities and prioritizing needs.
 - The City, along with the City Council, Borough President and State elected officials work very closely with H+H each year to assess our capital priorities and allocate capital grants to address H+H needs.
 - OMB has provided \$1.8 billion in capital funding over the life of the 10-year plan and we look forward to making many critical improvements to our infrastructure.



Support Staff Levels

- Our priority as a system is to invest in patient care and the front line staff that help improve patient care.
- Hiring more clinical staff – doctors, nurses, pharmacists and social workers – is very important but we understand that the care team is more than just the doctor and the nurse. Good care and our success as a system comes from partnership between all the staff that help our facilities run.
- We are continuing to evaluate needs across the system.



Epic, Translation Line, and Other Technology

- The system's new Electronic Health Record and Financial system is a critical step forward that will improve patient care and our financial solvency.
 - We have had very successful go-lives across six acute care facilities and dozens of community health centers since October 2018.
 - By the end of this year, we will be live at all of our acute facilities and all the community health centers.
- H+H is proud to be a leader in diversity and inclusion and our excellent language access services are a key part of that success
 - The "I Speak" campaign features education materials in many languages to promote the services we have available in 200 languages, palm cards to help patients request an interpreter and communicate in their preferred language, a special video of our staff delivering a welcoming message in different languages, and buttons for staff to showcase our language diversity.
 - At Elmhurst there was concern about the efficiency of the telephonic translator services. Following the meeting, the Chief Operating Officer met with the nurse practitioner and has in-service her team on a new process that eliminates additional prompts.
 - Elmhurst is also excited that they will be moving to a new video-based/app-based translation service over the next few months. They are presently piloting this service on two units and it has received great reviews.
- We appreciate and always welcome feedback from our stakeholders, patients, staff and the community as we work in partnership to enable each of our institutions to promote and protect the physical, mental and social well-being of ALL New Yorkers.

