

# **Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Public Borough Meetings Responses**

**Board of Directors Meeting  
December 10, 2020**

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# Fiscal Year 2020 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 2020 Annual Public Meetings in all five boroughs of NYC:

- Manhattan - September 8, 2020 via teleconference/videoconference
- Brooklyn - September 15, 2020 via teleconference/videoconference
- Queens - September 22, 2020 via teleconference/videoconference
- Bronx - October 13, 2020 via teleconference/videoconference
- Brooklyn - October 20, 2020 via teleconference/videoconference

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



## Compilation of questions and responses

- NYC H+H recorded the individual questions/ concerns from each of the public meetings.
- This deck contains a comprehensive listing of those questions/ concerns and responsive information will be posted on the:  
<https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/public-meetings-notice/>
- Each slide is identified with the name of the borough in which the question/ concern was raised.
  - When a specific facility was referenced in the question/ concern, it is also included on the slide.



# Main Focus of Concerns Raised by the Public

COVID-19  
Resurgence, Safety

Facility/  
Equipment

Equity/ SDOH

Programming:  
Behavioral Health,  
Maternal Health,  
Sickle Cell

Individual Issues



## Manhattan: NYC Health + Hospitals

### Public Concern:

- Community member asked about provisions being made and policies and procedures to manage a resurgence of COVID-19.

### Response:

- NYC Health + Hospitals has been preparing for a potential resurgence for months, working through an incident command structure and intensive data monitoring to guide these critical preparations.
- NYC Health + Hospitals has continued to treat COVID-19 patients and partner closely with the Test + Trace Corps, DOHMH, the Mayor's Office, and other partners for the duration of the pandemic. We have not halted in this work.



## Public Concern (continued):

- Community member asked about provisions being made and policies and procedures to manage a resurgence of COVID-19.

## Response:

- We have identified surge plans for up to 2,800 COVID-19 cases within our system utilizing flex space, NYC Health + Hospitals/Roosevelt Island Medical Center, new ICU beds at NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx, cross training of staff, and additional staffing.
- Other surge preparations include improved patient level-loading process, improved home monitoring with pulse oximeters, stockpiling PPE and critical equipment, and additional communication and training strategies.



**Public Concern:**

- Community member inquired about historic changes to health care facilities.

**Response:**

- In case of any disruption of health care services due to Covid-19 or otherwise, Health + Hospital follows relevant regulatory requirements and works to ensure patients are informed that they have options for health care at Health + Hospitals or elsewhere.



### Public Concern:

- Community member inquired about the expectation of the Sydenham Auxiliary during the pandemic.

### Response:

- Continue to sponsor independent fundraising efforts;
- Act as an agent for the facility in receiving and administering funds received from fundraising efforts, gifts, bequests, donations, revenue sources other than direct patient service, interest on trusts funds or Auxiliary accounts;
- Distribute funds for activities or programs/projects that enhance the facility's capacity to provide quality patient care;
- Continue to improve the image and perception of the facility and expand community outreach efforts; and
- Continue to support and participate in the Health + Hospitals Central Council of Auxiliaries Quarterly meeting.





### Public Concern:

- Community member seeking increased community outreach in Harlem and follow-up appointments at Sydenham.

### Response:

- Sydenham is working on expanding outreach efforts in the Harlem community, including at Gotham Health Centers at the NYCHA - St. Nicholas and Dyckman housing development.
- Sydenham will also increase its outreach activities to small businesses in the community to offer access to primary care services and COVID-19 testing.
- Additionally, Sydenham is in the process of upgrading its telecommunications system using voice over IP that would support the redirection of calls to the call center in order to provide enhanced round the clock availability to patients to support their needs.



**Public Concern:**

- Community member requested the acquisition of six blood pressure machines and an ultrasound unit for the Women's Health Program.

**Response:**

- Sydenham's Auxiliary plans to purchase the six blood pressure machines, on behalf of the health center.
- Sydenham plans to purchase the ultrasound unit by requesting funding from Health + Hospitals, elected officials and fundraising through the Auxiliary.



### Public Concern:

Community member would like staff to be educated on mask use and for Bellevue to address homeless and mental health.

### Response:

- Bellevue Hospital has educated its staff and patients on the importance of wearing a mask.
- They have signage throughout the hospital including elevators, email blasts, screensavers, waiting areas and slides on plasma screens.
- Supervisors remind and review with staff at staff meetings and weekly operations meeting. In addition for visitors who do not have face masks, they are handed out at information and reception desks.
- Bellevue's Safety Net Clinic in Ambulatory Care provides medical and mental health care for homeless patients.
- They have a Code Blue designation and provide shelter for the homeless when the temperature drops to 32 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, provide a warm place overnight and connect them with NYC Department of Homeless Services.



### Public Concern:

Harlem Hospital staff nurse is concerned that nurse seniority is not being recognized at Harlem when request for special accommodations are made; and community member expressed concern regarding the demolition of historic buildings on the Harlem Hospitals campus.

### Response:

- The provision of special accommodations for staff fall under the umbrella of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and are being managed accordingly.
- The demolition of the Women's Pavilion building is a part of a larger NYC Capital Project. The Women's Pavilion is not deemed a historic landmark.



### Public Concern:

- Community member is seeking information on emergency room expansion and renovations to accommodate the volume of patients

### Response:

- Funding secured. Expansion/renovation has started with projected completion date of February 2021.

### Public Concern:

- Community member seeking repairs to the facade to improve the physical plant and safety.

### Response:

- Funding secured and project approved by the Board. Work to begin soon.



### Public Concern:

- Community member request repair and upgrade to the elevators, which they fear are now unreliable and dangerous.

### Response:

- Funding secured and renovation in progress with projected completion by June 2021.

### Public Concern:

- Community member request upgrades to the medical equipment include the MRI, security monitoring system and HVAC system.

### Response:

- Upgrades are ongoing.



**Public Concern:**

Community member seeking the continuity of behavioral health services.

**Response:**

No plans to reduce behavioral health services. Outdated inpatient detox has been discontinued and replaced by more comprehensive outpatient detox and services. Woodhull has kept up with the need/demand for behavioral health services.



## Brooklyn: NYC Health + Hospitals/McKinney

### Public Concern:

- Community member seeking: protection from staff layoffs; onsite meal prep; provision of gratitude and empowerment classes; and transparency from senior leadership.

### Response:

- McKinney leadership has confirmed there was never an intent to lay off staff.
- McKinney has been planning for an enhanced dining experience for our residents. One major objective is to provide meals without the traditional tray, in other words, serving each course one at a time, similar to a restaurant. McKinney was planning on deploying the initiative in early 2020 until COVID restricted social gathering of residents for communal dining. The staff is looking forward to getting back to their plans as soon as restrictions are lifted.
- McKinney continues to hold debriefing sessions with all staff, through the Helping Healers Heal (H3) initiative and they are very responsive. They also hosted townhall meetings where system changes were explained to staff and where staff has been given the opportunity to email the CEO with any and all concerns.





### Public Concern:

- Community member seeking Level I Trauma Center at Coney Island Hospital.

### Response:

- While the cost associated with a Level I Trauma Center is prohibitive at this time due to the requirement of 24/7 trauma surgery and anesthesia coverage, Coney Island Hospital is able to care for hundreds of traumatically injured patients per year in its fully prepared resuscitation rooms.
- The hospital has a trauma response team on standby for any incoming codes and performs multiple drills to be ready for patients that are brought in for care. In addition, the hospital recently appointed an EMS and Disaster Fellowship trained Director for Trauma and Prehospital Medicine to ensure preparedness and quality.



### Public Concern:

- Community expressed concern about increasing violence in community; social equity, and food and financial insecurity.

### Response:

- NYC Health + Hospitals/ Kings County has used the following evidence-based strategies to address these issues including:
  - Enhanced screening for social determinants such as food insecurity, legal, or financial needs and providing support to patients to address social needs.
  - The Kings Against Gun Violence (KAGV), which is a non-profit youth-serving organization with a mission to prevent and eliminate interpersonal violence from the lives of young people through advocacy, peer leadership, community mobilization, and social justice.



**Public Concern:**

- **Community member concerned about ethnic disparity among clinical staff at Kings County, specifically the clinical residents and a request to expand the clinical residency programs to encourage the inclusion of minority groups, specifically African Americans.**

**Response:**

- **The residents and students at NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County are primarily sponsored by SUNY Downstate. We work closely with this institution to ensure recruitment of as vast and diverse a range of trainees that will reflect the community we serve.**

- **As evident from the data below, our efforts are showing results. Our goal is to establish a program aimed at appealing to minority candidates to select Kings County as their future career choice, starting as early as high school.**

For the whole house, current diversity of residents and fellows:

44% Female / 56% Male

From 94 countries, 56% not from United States

Ethnic Identity	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.4%
Asian	38.3%
Black or African American	12.2%
Hispanic or Latino	8.7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.2%
Other	9.5%
White	35.0%

Ethnic identity adds up to more than 100% because some identify with more than one group.

Percentage data of current diversity of residents and fellows at SUNY Downstate based on a denominator of 998 for gender and 1048 for the country of origin ethnicity – as some identify with more than one group.



**Public Concern:**

- Community member seeking improvement to the system to address inequity.

**Response:**

- NYC Health + Hospitals' ongoing effort to promote racial and social equity is fundamental to our organization's strategy.
- The system has implemented several initiatives to address this concern:
  - Creation of an Equity and Access Council
    - In July, NYC Health + Hospitals created the Equity and Access Council, which serves as an advisory group to support the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in developing strategies and initiatives to promote equity and optimize the delivery of care and health outcomes for diverse populations.
  - Incorporated equity into the system's strategic goals.



**Public Concern (continued):**

- Community member seeking improvement of the system to address inequity.

**Response:**

- NYC Health + Hospitals has used the following evidence-based strategies to address health disparities including:
  - Utilizing data to monitor disparities.
  - Continual treatment of underlying health conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, which is prevalent in communities of color.
  - Expanding the use of telehealth and improving access to remote monitoring devices such as home blood pressure monitors and remote peer support for diabetes.
  - Enhanced screening for social determinants such as food insecurity, legal, or financial needs and providing support to patients to address social needs.



## Queens: NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens & Elmhurst

### Public Concern (continued):

- Community member seeking improvement of the system to address inequity.

### Response:

- In the spring, the Mayor empaneled a Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity, which announced three new NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health sites that will provide comprehensive care to support recovering COVID-19 patients, including pulmonary care, radiologic and diagnostic services, mental health services, on-site medication, and retail pharmacies.
- These sites – Bushwick (in Brooklyn), Jackson Heights (in Queens), and Tremont (in the Bronx) – are opening in communities of color hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Queens: NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens & Elmhurst)

### Public Concern (continued):

- Community member seeking improvement of the system to address inequity.

### Response:

- In September, Health + Hospitals expanded NYC Care in Manhattan and Queens, which will now guarantee health care to all NYC residents, especially those in underserved communities.
- Health + Hospitals has made two e-learning modules available to staff on the **Impact of Unconscious Bias on a Culture of Inclusion, and Diversity and Inclusion: A Business Imperative**.
  - This year, 15,000 Health + Hospitals direct care and service employees completed the e-learning modules.
  - Unconscious bias and cultural sensitivity content was also embedded into annual in-service that is mandatory for all employees.



### Public Concern (continued):

- Community member seeking improvement of the system to address inequity.

### Response:

- NYC Health + Hospitals has engaged **Perception Institute**, a leading organization who translates innovative mind science research on race, gender, ethnic, and other identities into workable solutions to reduce bias and discrimination, and promote belonging. Health + Hospitals began training NYC Health + Hospitals Board of Directors and senior leadership last fall.
- NYC Health + Hospitals offers free language services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year in over 200 languages and dialects.
- In FY 2018, NYC Health + Hospitals facilities received more than 1 million requests for interpretation services that yielded 13 million interpretation minutes.
- NYC Health + Hospitals translate key patient documents, such as consent forms and patient education materials, into the top 13 languages requested by limited English proficient (LEP) New Yorkers.





**Public Concern:**

- Community member would like to see safe return of patients to ambulatory care services and infection prevention and control precautions.

**Response:**

- NYC Health + Hospitals has been able to bring patients back to in-person care safely.
- NYC Health + Hospitals has re-engineered its Emergency Departments and clinics across the system to provide safe care after Covid-19 surge.
- The 11 EDs have undergone physical changes to maximize distance between patients in waiting rooms and care areas; new spaces for isolation and negative pressure rooms were created to help protect from infections like COVID-19.
- NYC Health + Hospitals is also adapting similar physical changes in the out-patient care clinics, which will also increase their capacity to offer safe in-person care visits across the system's 11 hospitals and 30 Gotham Health sites.



### Public Concern (continued):

- Community member would like to see safe return of patients to ambulatory care services and infection prevention and control precautions.

### Response:

- Most appointments will still be offered and encouraged over televisits, which the system quickly ramped-up access to during the initial weeks of COVID to make sure New Yorkers were accessing the care they needed when they need it – and from the comfort of their home.
- Operating departments across the public health system’s 11 hospitals also increased capacity to perform more scheduled medically necessary surgeries for existing patients.
- To ensure everyone’s safety, physical care spaces implement a number of safety protocols, including mandatory temperature and symptom checks for all patients, visitors and staff upon arrival, the requirement of face masks to be worn by all, updated signage to remind everyone of social distancing, and more.



## **Public Concern (continued):**

- Community member would like to see safe return of patients to ambulatory care services and infection prevention and control precautions.

## **Response:**

- Health + Hospitals recently launched virtual Expresscare services, to further ensure New Yorkers have convenient, one-click access to the most appropriate care where they're safest.
- New Yorkers in need of non-emergency urgent care can connect to a provider in 200+ languages for an evaluation by going to [Expresscare.nyc](https://www.expresscare.nyc) on any device with a camera.
- The system's virtual ExpressCare launch builds on the public health system's recent expansion of telemedicine offerings.



**Public Concern (continued):**

- Community member would like to see safe return of patients to ambulatory care services and infection prevention and control precautions.

**Response:**

- Health + Hospitals recently announced its expansion of remote services during the COVID-19 pandemic to improve monitoring of chronic diseases and enhance connection to wrap-around services from home.
- Led by the system's Office of Population Health, access to a diabetes peer mentoring program was expanded at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst to help patients monitor sugar levels.
- Over 2,000 at-home blood pressure monitors have been distributed to patients across the system. The expansion of remote monitoring resources allows patients to eliminate some in-person clinic visits, while still being proactive about chronic diseases management and necessary interventions.



**Public Concern:**

- Staff nurse/community member seeking expansion of dialysis and geriatric care at NCB; behavioral health educators for NCB and Jacobi; extended support for nursing education; and educating staff on the expectations regarding the use of PPE.

**Response:**

- Though there are currently no plans to develop an outpatient dialysis service, we are now better equipped to provide dialysis services to patients admitted to our facility as a result of the surge capacity improvements made at NCB.
- We are glad to announce that we have recently hired a director of nursing education with a great passion for nurse education. His years of experience empowering nurses through education will be a great asset to the facilities.
- We have also hired a nurse educator for behavioral health services who is scheduled to start soon as well.
- NCB and Jacobi have educated its staff on the expectations regarding the proper use of PPE.



## **Public Concern:**

- Staff nurse/community member seeking allocation of resources towards modalities of care, the treatment of sickle cell, maternal health, and mental health.

## **Response:**

- NYC Health + Hospitals recently received a grant for \$1.25 million per year and is renewable, pending funding availability, for 2 years (3 years total). Health + Hospitals plans to create a Sickle Cell Center of Excellence at H+H/Queens with expanded research throughout the H+H system, including Jacobi.



**Public Concern (continued):**

- Staff nurse/community member would like to address disparities in health care related to sickle cell, maternal health, and mental health.

**Response:**

- In 2018, the Mayor's Office, NYC DOHMH, NYC H+H collaborated to develop a comprehensive Maternal Health program for the specific purpose of maternal mortality reduction. At NYC H+H that funding was applied to four different initiatives:
  - **Simulation Laboratory:** On Sept 4, 2020, H+H announced expansion of 6 new simulation mini-labs at the largest acute care sites; they are in close proximity to the Labor & Delivery suites so that medical staff can have access to trainings more frequently and regularly.
  - **Maternal Medical Home:** Care coordinators help to provide management, enhanced screening and navigation for NYC H+H patients. They screen patients for depression, clinical conditions, trauma, social determinants of health, and psychosocial conditions, to help patients during pregnancy that are predisposed to adverse outcomes.



### Public Concern (continued):

- Staff nurse/community member would like to address disparities in health care related to sickle cell, maternal health, and mental health.

### Response (continued):

- **Internal Pregnancy Optimization Program:** The pregnancy optimization program is for primary care teams to identify patients that are intending to get pregnant within the next year; they can get referred to services to help optimize patient health in planning for pregnancy.
- **Mother - Baby Coordinated Visits:** The program coordinates maternal care to ensure that while mom brings her baby for wellness checks, her postnatal care is also accomplished during the same visit.





**Public Concern (continued):**

- Staff nurse/community member would like to address disparities in health care related to sickle cell, maternal health, and mental health.

**Response:**

- Since the pandemic hit, NYC H+H has worked tirelessly to ensure our doors remain open so that patients can access BH care safely and continuously. This includes telehealth for psychiatry and substance use services, as well as face-to-face sessions for those who need more intensive care, or cannot access technology to be treated remotely.
- During and after the COVID-19 pandemic peak in the spring of 2020, NYC Health + Hospitals continued to offer in- and out-patient behavioral health care to new and existing patients at all facilities. The public health system utilized all modalities, including in-person, telephonic, video calls, home visits, and mobile crisis outreach, to provide care.
- NYC Health + Hospitals' Office of Behavioral Health works hand-in-hand with the NYS Office of Mental Health to ensure coordination among all available behavioral health beds across all hospitals.



### Public Concern:

- Community member is seeking capital funding for the repair of the sidewalks and trees outside of and around the entire perimeter of Lincoln Hospital.

### Response:

- NYC Health + Hospitals/ Lincoln is finalizing the pricing and purchase order with a construction company and expects the work to be completed by the end of the calendar year.
- The NYC Department of Parks is engaged and assisting with work related to the trees.



**Public Concern:**

- Community member is seeking expansion of health care services in Staten Island and at NYC Health + Hospitals/Seaview.

**Response:**

- NYC Health + Hospitals/ Seaview is looking to expand its services by building an onsite hemodialysis center.
- NYC Health + Hospitals/ Seaview is also looking to incorporate telemetry services on its sub-acute unit, which will provide an enhanced ability to monitor a patients vital signs should they be out of bed or attending physical therapy, or off the unit in general, etc.

