

# **Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Public Borough Meetings Responses**

**Board of Directors Meeting  
September 29, 2021**

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# Fiscal Year 2021 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 2021 Annual Public Meetings in all five boroughs of NYC:

- Manhattan - April 20, 2021 via teleconference/videoconference
- Brooklyn - June 15, 2021 via teleconference/videoconference
- Queens - May 25, 2021 via teleconference/videoconference
- Bronx - June 8, 2021 via teleconference/videoconference
- Staten Island - March 16, 2021 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 questions/ concerns and responsive information.
- We will provide an overview today.
- The full deck will be posted for public review:  
<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  
vaccinations

Facility  
funding,  
projects

Inequities

Behavioral  
health

CAB questions

## Public Concern:

- Community member asked about provisions being made to address vaccine hesitancy in the African American community.

## Response:

- NYC Health + Hospitals is working along with our partners in government to get accurate, respectful, nonbiased information out to the community. We are grateful to the community and faith-based leaders who have taken on these efforts as well.
- For our staff, NYC Health + Hospitals has provided as much information as possible through live webinars, FAQs, posters and written materials, a resource center on our intranet, and one-on-one conversations. We've initiated our Vax Champs program, which allows our team members to see their colleagues and leaders receiving the vaccine to allay some of their concerns.
- For our community, we have made vaccine as accessible as possible through our facilities, additional brick-and-mortar sites, and mobile and pop-up sites. We have provided videos encouraging vaccination with our community leaders, including our NYC H+H/ Harlem CAB Chair. We have worked to partner with all of our CAB leaders to spread accurate information respectfully.
- NYC Health + Hospitals is also participating in City-wide efforts to deter vaccine hesitance like the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity and partnering with DOHMH, City Hall, and other governmental leaders to encourage vaccine acceptance.

# NYC HEALTH+ HOSPITALS Manhattan: NYC Health + Hospitals

## Response (Cont'd):

- NYC Health + Hospitals leaders and other City health professionals participate in panels, community events, and informational seminars on a constant basis and are able to deploy doctors into the field to discuss vaccine concerns with the general public.
- NYC Health + Hospitals produced a series of videos featuring NYC Health + Hospitals Community Advisory Board Chairs encouraging staff, patients, and everyone to get vaccinated.
- NYC Health and Hospitals is happy to provide speaker at any events when requested.

## Public Concern:

- Community member inquired about efforts being made to vaccinate staffs at health care facilities.

## Response:

- We have engaged in significant efforts including our Vax Champ campaign, incentives for staff members, pre-scheduling appointments for our staff, and reminding them through signage, webinars, and direct communication. We are thrilled that our staff vaccination rate has risen to over 80%
- NYC Health + Hospitals continuously conducts townhalls, webinars and many other outreach activities on the Covid-19 vaccine to help educate staff on the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- NYC Health + Hospitals Our COVID-19 Vaccine Ambassador Program has over 500 Vaccine Ambassadors. These are fully vaccinated staff members who have been trained on how to communicate effectively on the covid-19 vaccines and are encouraged to help educate friends, family and colleagues on the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Public Concern:**

- Community member inquired about the quarantine of residents at Coler during the lockdown.

### **Response:**

- We recognize the difficulties faced by many of our long-term care residents and acknowledge that this was a particularly challenging time period for them. Coler acted at all times pursuant to State requirements, CDC guidance, and infection prevention best practices. We are delighted that Coler is increasingly able to relax restrictions for our residents and their loved ones.

## **Public Concern:**

- Community member is seeking to understand why NYC Health + Hospitals or the state cannot mandate nursing home staffs be vaccinated. Residents have complained that staff are bringing COVID back into the units.

## **Response:**

- There is now a State vaccine mandate in place, which NYC Health + Hospitals is implementing across our system.



## Public Concern:

- Metropolitan CAB chair spoke about the need for a transparent and open administration that will not penalize members for speaking their mind.

## Response:

- We are grateful to our CAB members and all volunteers for the time and talent they devote to our system and our mission. We are committed to mutually respectful dialogue and partnership, and we appreciate the various points of views our CABs represent.

## Public Concern:

- Metropolitan CAB member would like the administration to comply with the HHC guidelines to communicate with the advisory board when hiring a new facilities CEO.

## Response:

- The CAB is an important partner and advisor in our critical search process. When we conduct a full search for a new facility CEO, the facility's CAB Chair is part of that process. When we are able to promote one of our internal health care heroes to a new level of responsibility and leadership, the CAB chair is advised before a public announcement is made. We appreciate all that our CABs bring to our community and welcome their points of view.

## Public Concern:

- The Bellevue CAB is concerned about planning for a crisis, doing more with less, and expanding revenues for Bellevue.

## Response:

- NYC Health + Hospital/ Bellevue's CEO William Hicks will continue to address pressing issues with the CAB, including crisis management, resources, and budget allocations at the CABs monthly meetings. In addition, the facility's senior leadership will also continue to provide regular updates on events and initiatives at the facility.

## Public Concern:

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

## Response:

- Renovations completed and certain sections already in use. Official ribbon-cutting ceremony is 10/14/21

## Public Concern:

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

## Response:

- Work has started and should be completed by 12/31/22

## Public Concern:

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

## Response:

- Renovation of elevators 7, 8 and 9 has been completed. They're back in service.

## Public Concern:

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

## Response:

- Upgrades are ongoing. The facility's old MRI is currently being replaced with state-of-the-art MRI, with the intent of completion by late fall.

## Public Concern:

- Community member seeking the continuity of behavioral health services.

## Response:

- We understand the importance of behavioral health services. There are no changes/reduction planned for behavioral health services at NYC Health + Hospitals/ Woodhull.

## Public Concern:

- Community member seeking an update on Level I Trauma Center at Coney Island Hospital

## Response:

- The cost associated with becoming a designated Trauma Center are prohibitive due to the requirement of 24/7 specialty and trauma surgery coverage. However, Coney Island Hospital is prepared to care for hundreds of trauma patients per year in our 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.
- To that end, the Emergency Department appointed an EMS and Disaster Fellowship trained Director for Trauma and Prehospital Medicine to ensure preparedness and quality.
- Additionally, the hospital is now a New York State certified percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) Center, which means we can now care for South Brooklyn residents who are having acute heart attacks – they no longer need to have ambulances travel 20+ minutes to the next nearest hospital that offers comprehensive cardiac services.
- We are also now an Advanced Primary Stroke Center, which means we can provide state-of-the-art care for patients with acute onset of a stroke.

## Public Concern:

- Community member seeking an update on Coney Island Hospital's Primary Stroke Center and Disease Management Program certification.

## Response:

- In July, Coney Island Hospital was officially certified by the Joint Commission as an Advanced Primary Stroke Center. The designation is offered in collaboration with the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association, and will help our hospital be recognized both locally and nationally for our exceptional care of stroke patients and implementation of a stroke disease management program.
- Since January 2021, Coney Island Hospital's process improvement initiatives have reduced median administration time from 105 minutes to 33 minutes. Nationally, only 40% of patients are treated within 45 minutes of arrival and fewer than 10% are treated with 30 minutes.



## Public Concern:

- Community member request that H+H keep providing Kings County with funding, personnel and staff, so they can continue the upward trend for the hospital.

## Response:

- NYC Health + Hospitals/ Kings County is a critical part of our system.
- NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County work with our corporate partners to establish staffing patterns that will match the patient's demand. This is an ongoing process as patient demand ebbs and flows due to the seasonal changes.
- NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County forecast staff attrition on an annual basis for positions at the hospital
- NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County does not have roadblocks in the approval/hiring process as it has been streamlined to meet the needs of the hospital.

## Public Concern:

- Community member commended Kings County Hospital and offered the support of Community Board 9, pledging to work together to increasing access across its continuum of care.

## Response:

- Thank you! Community Boards are such important partners in supporting our facilities and building a better New York City

### **Public Concern:**

- Community member seeking funding for outpatient dialysis center at Queens Hospital for improvement to the system and address inequity.

### **Response:**

- NYC Health + Hospitals/ Queens is actively working towards such a center.
- In April 2021, NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens submitted a Community Project Funding request to the House Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee (through Representative Grace Meng's office) to build an Outpatient Dialysis Center. Rep Meng and other elected officials are critical champions for this work. This request is still pending.
- The project involves renovating existing hospital space (a retired swimming pool room) to build an Outpatient Dialysis Center.
- The Outpatient Dialysis Center would serve a significant medical need in the community given the high volume of patients with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Chronic Kidney Disease Level 4 (CKD4), access to chronic renal dialysis or in need of kidney transplant) due to the complications of diabetes, which is a significant healthcare concern in the community.
- This would allow Queens Hospital to further close the gap in delivering services and address disparities in healthcare delivery and access.

### **Public Concern:**

- Community member seeking a systemwide investment on healthcare resources in the Rockaway Peninsula.

### **Response:**

- NYC Health +Hospitals is with local leaders to assess specific need and identify the best way we can serve this important community.

**Public Concern:** Community member seeks opening up vaccination sites geographically so as to serve large number of residents

### **Response:**

- Vaccination is available at all H+H facilities, at large citywide locations, and through various targeted and community-based programs.
- NYC H+H facilities were amongst the first places to provide public vaccinations in NYC, ensuring that staff and their most vulnerable patients were able to get vaccinated at a familiar, community location.

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

### Response(Cont'd):

- NYC Test and Trace operates three mass vaccination sites at CITI Field, Brooklyn Army Terminal and Bathgate that operates 24/7 to ensure that people can get vaccinated at any hour of the day.
- NYC Test and Trace also works with MedRite to offer at-home vaccinations, so people can get vaccinated without ever leaving the house!
- To view all vaccination sites, visit <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>

### Public Concern :

- Community member asks how H+H seeks to address the root causes of poverty that afflicts the African- American communities – which has resulted in said community disproportionately affected by COVID

### Response:

- This is a thoughtful and important question. At NYC Health + Hospitals, we are deeply invested in the social determinants of health that impact so many of our communities negatively
- Our Population Health team is focused on this work, developing partnerships and services for legal, housing, and food supports, among others.
- We are also lucky to partner with our colleagues in government that are specifically focused on economic development and with on-the-ground CBOs.

**Public Concern (continued):**

- Community member seeking improvement from the system to address inequity and the lack of Black males aspiring to be doctors.

**Response:**

- Thank you for raising this point. H+H is in the process of developing a program specifically to support underrepresented medical students and doctors. This work is evolving, but we are deeply committed to investing in the future of our health care heroes and our community members.



**Public Concern:**

- Community member seeks additional mental health services at Jacobi

**Response:**

- Due to the ongoing pandemic, NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi has seen an increase in patients seeking to access mental health services. In response, we plan to open a new Outpatient Behavioral Health space in January and are recruiting providers to expand mental health services.
- Our Stand Up to Violence (SUV) Program, which works to reduce violence among at-risk youth in the community, has seen a sharp increase in young people seeking mental health services due to an increase in violence in our communities during the pandemic.
- The program recently received Congressional funding to add mental health services to their outreach and hospital-based team to offer a comprehensive treatment plan for patients and participants.

**Public Concern:**

- Community member touched on the importance of continuing the annual NYC Health + Hospitals lobby day for CAB members

**Response:**

- We agree wholeheartedly and are grateful to our CABs for their participation in advocacy, whether in-person or virtually.

**Public Concern:**

- Community member spoke on the need for NYC Health + Hospitals to do more Covid vaccination outreach in the Bronx.

**Response:**

- NYC Health +Hospitals/Test and Trace has done numerous events the Bronx in the following neighborhoods: Fordham Heights, Parkchester, Allerton, Highbridge, South Bronx, Crotona, Westchester Square



**Public Concern:**

- Community member seeks to improve the interview process for CAB members at Lincoln.

**Response:**

- The process for interviewing prospective CAB members at NYC Health and Hospitals/Lincoln has been enhanced.
- Recruitment has been expanded through working with community partners to make sure that prospective candidates are reflective of the diversity of the community
- CAB applicants go through a three-prong process: screening by the referring partner with submission of application and supporting documentation, screening through Public Affairs Committee with final approval based upon Interview with CEO of NYC Health and Hospitals/Lincoln Christopher Roker and his sign off on the applicant.
- When these steps are completed, the recommendations are submitted to the President and CEO of NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation, Dr. Mitchel Katz/ his designee at the Office of External and Regulatory Affairs for appointment.

### Public Concern (Cont'd)

- The portion of patient candidates for the CAB is handled by staff recommendations and submitted directly to the CEO for final review and ultimately submitted to Dr. Katz /his designee for appointment.
- NYC Health+Hospitals/Lincoln maintains a very healthy and positive relationship with Bronx Borough President's office and will continue to seat the CAB appointees.

### Public Concern:

- Community member would like the hospital to address rodent infestations and pesticide use in the Bronx, contributing to adverse health outcomes.

### Response:

- At NYC Health and Hospitals/Lincoln only healthy products that have been approved by authorized vendors are used within our system.
- NYC Health and Hospitals /Lincoln would welcome a Task Force established by the Bronx Borough President to further address these issues. NYC Health and Hospitals/Lincoln would be happy to serve on such a Task Force.

**Public Concern:**

- Community member would like the hospital to address the heavy truck traffic in the Bronx as it is associated with adverse health effects such as asthma.

**Response:**

- NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln has a robust advance clinical practice for Asthma care staffed by highly qualified, board certified pulmonary specialists and a state-of-the-art respiratory therapeutic care program with a designated section within the Emergency Department for treating Asthma patients.
- Currently, construction of a bridge is underway that will remove the heavy traffic from the local streets, which will reduce the level of pollution.
- The creation of several open-spaces that has been funded by New York City and the federal government as a means of corrective action.
- The Department of Transportation is better positioned to address the issue of heavy truck traffic within the Bronx borough.

**Public Concern:**

- Community member wants to ascertain the possibility of building a diabetic center on the grounds of Seaview campus.

**Response:**

- We are delighted that we are opening such a center in September! We are grateful to Borough President James Oddo and our colleagues at City Hall for making this a reality with us.

**Public Concern:**

- Community member asked about Staten Island being the only borough without a public hospital and what can be done to remedy that?

**Response:**

- Staten Island is a critical part of the City and the H+H family. NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health Vanderbilt provides the full spectrum of care for children and adults in Staten Island. Our clinicians are experts in primary and preventive care, helping Staten Islanders to achieve their health goals.

