



The New York Academy of Medicine

At the heart of urban health since 1847

**Age-friendly New York City Community Forum Notes
Lincoln Hospital
Council Member Carmen Arroyo
April 22, 2008**

Note: Most of this forum was conducted in Spanish.

Approximate number of attendees: 120

Barriers to NYC's Age-friendliness

- Too much red tape.
- “I’m with Harlem Hospital. We need more housing. But even more, the problem is the lack of monitoring of home attendants. Also, banks need officers to ensure people are putting money in their accounts.”
[underlying idea seemed to be someone at the bank who would help seniors keep track of their funds]
- Safety. “We need senior safety zones like school safety zones to protect seniors outside of senior centers, and provide benches.”
- APS is not effective.
- “The costs of applying for citizenship are unaffordable, but we need to work things out to get entitlements.”
- “We can’t make the city friendlier without fixing the problems of today. If you can’t to make the city friendly, housing cultural sensitivity— look at what’s not working now. That will improve the city.”

Communication

- People don’t like to read. They like to watch TV. We need communication for seniors that they like.
- “I can no longer work because I need help. We need materials in Spanish. We came to this country late and it is difficult to communicate.

We can't give any more. We gave in our youth. We need translation for those who are older.”

- “I happen to know you can get housing court services from Home Base but I only happen to know because I am involved with Community Board 6. Senior Centers should have that information. There are lawyers that will help with any issue, not just housing. They come through the community boards, but that information has to get out.”
- “Medicare letters are difficult to understand. And you get the runaround. Seniors don't like talking to machines. You need one on one help.”

Health care

- The whole US is not age-friendly. Medicine for old people is too expensive.

Transportation

- Access-a-ride makes you wait 2 hours.
- Lack of transportation traps people at home. Sometimes seniors have to wait a long time on the street for a ride. Need regular transportation to help people stay active.
- We need transportation—a shuttle just for seniors. People try to avoid buses when the kids are on board.
- Its bad for people to have to be waiting in the cold outside for the bus
- After working for 60 years in New York we should get some things for free. The buses in Florida are free. Why not here?
- The parking spot for Access-a-ride by Hope of Israel is filled with cars from court officers and Yankee stadium. That makes it difficult for a person with a wheelchair to get in.

Housing

- Not enough senior housing
- No legal services for seniors in housing court
- “I worked for Social Security for 15 years. I had Section 8. My rent was raised now. They are building so many things all around. The rents keep changing. It is hard to qualify for a program,—you overqualify, you underqualify.”

Senior Centers

- Senior centers need more money
- Our senior center has been trying to get a lunch program for 10 years.

- “I’m with Morris Senior Center. I’m thankful for the senior centers we have. Don’t shut them down because it’s hard to get on a bus or a train. How will people get there?”
- “Baychester Senior Center is so hot. And in the winter its so cold. Seniors can’t stay there. I’m planning to cal Channel 12 next time. The centre has to be comfortable. Everyone should come. And you should have to leave at 2 or 3. But the youth come in and that makes it difficult to stay. Water comes into the auditorium. People pay there fare to come, but then they have to go home because its closed. Every senior center should have a representative. And make a council that will respond to our needs.”
- [director of the Gleeson Senior Center speaking] “I’ve been trying to get a social worker. Its so frustrating all the papers people come in with that they can’t understand. I try to help but I need social workers to be assigned. It takes away from my ability to work.”

Respect

- “Everything is about youth. Clerks will just pass you by.”
- “We need to respect seniors. I caw how well seniors are treated in Canada. They can sit out at night 10, 11, 12 and feel safe. We need to revamp DFTA to make sure seniors get what they deserve. This country is what it is today because of seniors.”

Cost of Living

- “I don’t have enough social security. Its hard to pay for medicine. I get about \$400 a month. My food coupons are just \$18. With that I have to pay \$209 rent and cleaning supplies, laundry. I don’t have anything left. I am having trouble with my wheelchair. I call Medicare and it’s back and forth with them. They aren’t paying for my chair. I have trouble with my vision. I can’t pay for my prescription. My rent—the landlord is asking me for more money. When I came out of the nursing home I paid for three months but he says I only paid for 2.”
- “I worked for 30 years. I’m not Medicaid eligible. Only Medicare. Once I pay for medicine, rent, utilities, I have nothing.”
- “Why did we work so hard? It would have been better if we hadn’t worked so hard and then we would Medicaid.”