



# The New York Academy of Medicine

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**Age-friendly New York City Community Forum Notes  
Catholic Charities Community Services – CYO Senior Center  
Council Member McMahon  
April 30, 2008**

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Approximate number of attendees: 60

## **OUTDOOR SPACES, BUILDINGS, & TRANSPORTATION**

- Road conditions are a serious matter – repair and maintenance is in short supply - and, the sewage system does not handle flooding which makes movement difficult, cumbersome and dangerous.
- There is a need for more CYO buses – new ones – there is an acute shortage of parking at the centers (CYO has four on Staten Island).
- Bus drivers need further training in safety and security. Drivers are indifferent & afraid to encourage/insist that priority seating for the elderly be enforced. Schools should instruct the students about proper behavior and respect for elders. The youth and elder safety needs need to be discussed and attitudes/behaviors adjusted. Respect for the elderly is not evident.
- Access-A-Ride - “That’s a very long story”- Everybody uses the services. But there are problems.
  - Scheduling and maintaining schedules needs greater attention.
  - Communication between drivers, their offices, and riders is cumbersome. Intraboro travel can be a nightmare – one often spends the entire day on the bus because the outerboro customers are not a priority.
  - Tipping the drivers can make the travel more comfortable; the drivers need increases in salary.
  - MTA has been very attentive to improving the system; but more needs to be done.

- Parks are not safe and some are not accessible. Parks should not continue to be used for the homeless; their needs required greater, careful and constant attention. There is one public park designated for the elderly but it has no parking and no bathroom facilities.

## **ECONOMIC OBSERVATIONS**

- Costs: gas, bridge tokens, rent, utilities, cabs were observed as items which have a greater and greater impact on their comfort level. Some supportive housing is now being threatened by plans for coop or condo conversion; persons on fixed, retirement incomes cannot to afford purchase – and are not considered a good mortgage or credit risk.
- All Centers should be able to participate in the funding available through DFTA; there should be further development of cyber-centers for seniors. OATS-type computer education should be expanded.
- There was lukewarm reception to the notion of returning to work (full and part-time) and minimal willingness to be a volunteer – “I’ve retired from voluntary work.”

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

- Increasing out-of-pocket expenses; generic vs brand-name processes need to be communicated to the senior through doctors, pharmacists, and other community resources.
- Geriatric mental health initiatives are needed.
- Medicaid abuses, fraud, over-utilization need greater attention. Costs of medications – “even with insurance” - are excessive! “Choosing the appropriate health care plan is hard and difficult.”
- “Seniors need assistance in these matters, not just marketing and advertising.”
- Medicare Advantage and the prescription-drug benefit established in 2003 has been overly aggressive in its marketing tactics - enrolling seniors without explaining what seniors are getting into. Some senior lost their supplemental coverage or access to their physicians. (These observations were made by professional health workers in the community and were met with agreement by the seniors. Social worker and discharge planning professionals from the community had attended

at the invitation of the Center, and were extremely forthright in their observations and suggestions.)