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**The City of New York
Community Board 8-Manhattan
Women & Families Committee Meeting
Ramaz School, 125 East 85th St., Heyman Auditorium
Thursday, January 23, 2020, 6:30 PM**

CB8M Members in Attendance: Vanessa Aronson, Gayle Baron, Lori Bores, Rebecca Dangoor, Rebecca Lamorte, Dori Newman, Peggy Price, Tricia Shimamura.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

1. Financing the Cost of Long-Term Care

The discussion focused on concerns about the cost of Long Term Care (LTC) and what new financing options should be explored.

Other than Medicaid, there are now few short-term options available for financing LTC, especially for people with pre-existing health conditions. To qualify for Medicaid, which is a program for the poor, applicants can have no more than \$2,000 in assets and a primary home. Those who wish to give away their assets to qualify for Medicaid face a 60-month look back period.

Yet, the Medicaid avenue may not remain viable, given the program's current financial difficulties: In January, NY State began cutting Medicaid funding by 1% to reduce the State's budget gap. Other short-term options are even more limited. Among these other options, Home and Community Based Services allows adults and children with developmental disabilities to live in communities rather than care facilities. The Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities program addresses a select population. Medicare covers 100 days of skilled nursing care after hospitalization.

One attendee raised doubts about finding a Medicaid replacement for financing long-term care over the foreseeable future. But others maintained that it would be possible to find funding replacements if NYS prioritized this issue. One replacement possibility could be to create a State supported variation on the 529 college savings program. In the LTC variation, savings in funds earmarked for LTC would be tax advantaged, both when contributions to the funds are made and when withdrawals are taken.

The W&F Committee's co-chairs have met with Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright to discuss how the state can provide near-term solutions to the LTC funding crisis. The Assembly Member responded with a plan to address this pressing issue at a Spring public hearing.

At the W&F Committee meeting, attendees aired a range of ideas to address the short term LTC funding. Among the ideas was to create group communities where several people share the cost of both the rental of an apartment and the cost of skilled care attendants. As pointed out, that would require having a mechanism to ensure that the attendants were paid at least the minimum wage. In addition, it was noted that some companies have an emergency fund for employees who must stay home for a short time to care for children or parents. Some attendees wondered how to expand that plan to cover people who lack access to a corporate emergency fund.

Additional ideas included: Studying and comparing the cost of apartment rentals (for home care) versus the cost of nursing homes; learning about Japan's handling of universal elder care needs; and, considering an incentive to Medicaid, perhaps with a subsidized public option, with a buy-in based on income.

2. Update on the Anti-Pink Tax Campaign

The committee decided to withdraw, and eventually revise, its flyer on avoiding the Pink Tax on women. The move follows an announcement that Gov. Cuomo plans to introduce legislation that would ban the Pink Tax on goods and services in New York State.

CB8's current anti-Pink Tax flyer--created before Gov. Cuomo weighed in on the Pink Tax this January--urges New Yorkers to support Senate bill (S2679). It would prohibit businesses from charging a price for goods based on gender, even though the products for men and women are substantially similar.

But the governor's expected legislation would go farther: As of now, the governor is expected to propose banning discriminatory pricing on services as well as goods. Additionally, the governor's plan is expected to require certain (yet undefined) service providers to post price lists for standard services. Businesses that violate this law would be subject to civil penalties.

The governor's proposal seems likely to supersede Senate bill S2679, requiring CB8's Pink Tax flyer to be updated. But because the governor has not, as of now, released his specific Pink Tax proposal, the committee decided to postpone making changes to the flyer until the governor's plan is introduced. However, at the meeting, some attendees raised concerns about Pink Tax legislation in New York. They felt that legislation barring discriminatory gender-based pricing should be aimed at manufacturers, not retailers. But the prohibition, they believe, would be difficult to enforce on the many manufacturers who sell products here but are based outside New York State.

Thus, the committee agreed that the Pink Tax problem also should be addressed nationally. (The Pink Tax Repeal Act, HR 2048, pending in the U.S. House of Representatives, would prohibit gender-based pricing of consumer products and services.)

3. Women on Corporate Boards in New York State

In December, the full CB8M board overwhelmingly approved the committee's request to urge Gov. Cuomo to support legislation—passed by the State's Senate and Assembly—that would create a study of women on corporate boards in New York State.

The W&F Committee chairs announced that, in late December, the governor did sign such legislation.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Lactation Facilities in New York State Offices in Albany

During a recent business trip to the state's capital, one meeting attendee who was could not find a private lactation room and had to use a state employee's office. This raised concern, especially since Section 206c, of the NYS Labor Law, applicable to all public and private businesses, calls for such rooms. It was agreed that the co-chairs would bring this problem to the attention of our elected representatives

2. Expanding Child Care Programs in New York City

At its upcoming March meeting, co-chairs announced that the committee will explore a range of possibilities for expanding free or affordable child care programs in NYC.

Possibilities will include two proposals being considered by Council Member Ben Kallos. They include: Creating a Manhattan location near City Hall, where parents could temporarily leave their children in supervised care while they attend to business with City agencies and officials; and, expanding pre-k programs for three-year olds on the Upper East Side (to be addressed jointly with CB8's Youth, Education and Libraries Committee.)

P. Gayle Baron and Margaret Price, Co-Chairs