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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Health, Seniors, and Social Services Committee
Wednesday, May 31, 2023 – 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom**

Minutes

Board Members Present: Bill Angelos, Meryl Brodsky*, Rebecca Dangoor, Wilma Johnson, Addeson Lehy, Barbara Rudder.

*Public Member

This meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Item 1: A discussion of the health benefits and potential risks of cannabis use with Dr. Ronnie Swift, Chief of Psychiatry at Metropolitan Hospital Center

Dr. Ronnie Swift, Chief of Psychiatry and Associate Medical Director for NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan, spoke about the benefits and dangers of cannabis use.

Cannabis has been used since 4000 BC. It has been used in the United States to treat glaucoma, nausea, chronic pain, and muscular spasticity. But studies have shown an alarming rate of psychotic symptoms for young people. Today, marijuana has more than three times the concentration of THC, a mind altering chemical, than that of 25 years ago, leading to more dependency and addiction. About one in six users under the age of 18 will become addicted and their cognitive ability negatively affected. If used while pregnant, it can affect the baby's development and health. It is dangerous to drive while under the influence.

Dr. Swift stressed the dangers of using the substances bought from the illegal cannabis shops that have sprung up in New York. You cannot be certain what the illegal product is laced with, possibly high amounts of fentanyl or rat poisoning, and the potency is unreliable. She stressed that although there is danger with any marijuana use, because legal dispensaries are regulated, the dangers are less so.

There are no FDA-approved drugs for the treatment of addiction. Dr. Swift stressed that a twelve-step self-help program and counseling give the best hope of a cure.

Item 2: New Business

No items of New Business were discussed.

Item 3: Old Business

No items of Old Business were discussed.

The committee adjourned at approximately 7:55 PM.

Rebecca Dangoor, Wilma Johnson, and Barbara Rudder, Co-Chairs