

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING JOINTLY WITH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SENIOR CENTERS

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March 23, 2015
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: MARGARET S. CHIN
PAUL A. VALLONE
Chairpersons

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
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Karen Koslowitz
Deborah L. Rose
Chaim M. Deutsch
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

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[sound check, pause]

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Josan [sic].

[Applause/laughter] Good morning. I'm Margaret
Chin, Chair of the Committee on Aging, and welcome to
the Fiscal 2016 Preliminary Budget Hearing for Aging
Committee have joined me with the Subcommittee on
Senior Centers Chaired by Council Member Paul
Vallone. Today, we will hear testimony from the
Department for the Aging, also referred to as DFTA,
on its Proposed Budget for Fiscal 2016 and General
Agency Operations within its proposed \$257.3 million
budget as well as performance indicators for aging
services with in the Fiscal 2015 Preliminary Mayor's
Management Report. It is often said that the City's
priorities are reflected in its budget, and when
presenting his Fiscal 2016 Preliminary Budget, the
Mayor repeatedly touted that this budget is fiscally
responsible, progressive and honest. It is hard for
me to agree that this budget is responsible
considering that seniors are one of the most

vulnerable populations. Yet, no new needs or additional baseline funding was added to DFTA's Fiscal 2016 Preliminary Budget. Seniors are one of the fastest growing populations in the city. There are 1.4 million adults aged 60 and over in New York City totaling more than 17% of the city's residents. By 2030, the number of seniors will grow by nearly 50% and comprise 20% of the city's total population. The increase in the senior population puts further pressure on the Department for the Aging to provide quality services and programs for older adult population in the city. The Department for the Aging Fiscal 2016 Preliminary Budget totals approximately \$257.3 million, a decrease of \$23.4 million or 8.4% when compared to the Fiscal 2015 Adopted Budget. Now, the majority of the decrease can be attributed to the absence of one-time Council funding for senior services in Fiscal 25--2015. The Council allocated almost \$20 million to DFTA in Fiscal 2015, of which the majority supported core services that the agency provides and are inadequately funded such as senior centers, elder abuse, and meals.

It is time that the Administration baselined Council funding for core services that DFTA

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provides instead of relying on Council funding year after year to fill the gaps in the agency's budget. Many seniors heavily depend on services provided through DFTA's network especially since a majority lives on fixed or low incomes. Seniors also contribute to the city in many ways, including volunteering their time to serve community members and being caregivers for grandchildren and other relatives. It is time that we recognize what all seniors do to make this city great and the Administration must make senior issues a priority.

Before I introduce Council Member Paul Vallone, the Chair of the Subcommittee on Senior Centers, I'd like to thank the committee staff for their work in preparing for this hearing. Tahini Sompura [sp?], Senior Legislative Finance Analyst Eric Bernstein, the counsel to the Committee, and James Subudhi, Policy Analyst to the Committee. James is not here today because his wife is having a baby right now. [laughter] And we will hear from Council Member Vallone followed by DFTA Commissioner Donna Corrado. Council Member Vallone, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you. Good morning fellow Chair Council Member Chin and in

short, I echo the concerns. I don't think there's much that we can be happy about this morning. We don't have new funding. So as we champion, as we always do for our seniors, and we're also championing for our fair share of what we believe is not enough. So I will give a very brief statement on that. Thank you.

The core of DFTA's Service Portfolio is the a department citywide network of 250 senior centers, which includes 16 innovative senior centers, which offer older New Yorkers hot meals and opportunities for socialization and recreation through a wide array of activities designed to improve the health and quality of life. I would once again like to echo the sentiment of our Chairwoman expressed this morning regarding the Fiscal 2016 Preliminary Budget. Seniors are the fastest growing population in this city. It is imperative now more than ever to provide these services for this special population. The lack of additional funding in DFTA's Fiscal Budget seems to reflect that seniors and senior issues are not a top priority for this Administration.

It is time the Administration increased baseline funding for senior centers, including transportation costs, space costs, and meal reimbursements that adequately address this need as we have heard time and time again over our hearings. This Committee advocated for increased baselined funding for senior centers last fiscal year, and are once again asking DFTA and the Administration for more funding for these centers. As Chair of the Senior Center Subcommittee, I'm concerned that the fate of New York City Housing Authority, NYCHA senior centers that were slated to close once again in Fiscal 2015, but were saved by the Council. Although these centers are not a part of DFTA's network, they still fall under my purview for oversight. It is time that the Administration has a thoughtful approach when addressing this issue. In particular, if there are some NYCHA senior centers that meet the qualifications to be converted into a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community. Our NORCs that Margaret and I have once again championed and looked to expanding.

And before we are about to hear from our Commissioner, I don't think this is a time or the

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place ever to shortchange our seniors. And Margaret and I will always stand united, as with this Council, to make sure that every penny goes to the fastest aging and the fastest part of the population of city and probably our country. It's just something that we will stand with you, Commissioner, hopefully as you make the fight for additional funds. So now we'll hear from our Commissioner Donna Corrado.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Before the Commissioner starts, I would like to introduce the council members of the Committee that joined us, Council Member Rose from Staten and Council Member Koslowitz from Queens. So I would like to ask Matt Carlin. Matt, are you substituting to help us swear in the Commissioner before she testifies.

LEGAL COUNSEL CARLIN: [off mic] I am.

[laughter]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you.

LEGAL COUNSEL CARLIN: My chair doesn't make me do this. [laughs] Commissioner, do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee, and to respond honestly to council member questions?

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[pause]

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I do. Good morning, Chairperson Chin, Chairperson Vallone, members of the Aging Committee, Council Members and stakeholders, executives of agencies, our senior constituents, and just the staff. I am Donna Corrado, Commissioner of the New York City Department for the Aging, and I am joined today by Joy Wang, Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Fiscal Operations to discuss DFTA's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2016. I would like to share DFTA's Fiscal Year '16 priorities, which build upon the agency's accomplishments. In Fiscal Year '16 the DFTA Budget had a modest increase. The Fiscal Year '15 Budget included \$3.3 million to address rising food costs for congregate and home delivered meals; \$2.6 million for case management services; \$2.3 million for innovative senior centers, \$1.5 million to support French Cross and Home Care Workers. Also, DFTA received \$472,000 to expand the Grandparent Resource Center Program to provide outreach in 15 New York City Housing Authority developments, which are the focus of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety.

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We applaud Chairperson Chin, Chairperson Vallone and the members of the Aging Committee together with Speaker Mark-Viverito, and Finance Chairperson Ferreras for securing \$20.6 million in Council funding for senior services last fiscal year. Important initiatives such as expanding NORCs Naturally Occurring Retirement Community programs supporting senior centers needs, responding to seniors that require home care. Providing services to the LGBT community in every borough and enhancing elder abuse services were all made possible because of your efforts. So thank you. After sustaining budgets in previous fiscal years, the increased funding in '15 reversed a decade long down funding trend. And this increase helped reverse this trend, and we have begun to rebuild the critical infrastructure within DFTA programs.

As we prepare for the aging boom, it is our hope that resources will meet or exceed the demand in order to adequately address the diverse population of older New Yorkers. In Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget projects \$257.3 million in funding. The budget includes allocations of \$114 million to support senior centers; \$34 million for

home delivered meals; \$24 million for case management; \$18 million to support home care for homebound seniors who were not Medicaid eligible; and \$6.5 million for NORC programs, and \$4 million for caregiver support services. This fiscal year, DFTA is exploring needs in geriatric mental health services, case management, home care, and home delivered meals. Earlier this month we joined the First Lady Chirlane McCray in launching here Mental Health Initiative to shatter this stigma. Together we held round table discussions at DFTA's sites and visited a senior center and a geriatric mental health clinic to focus on the mental health needs of older adults. In addition, with the continued rise in the older adult population, issues of poverty and frailty are increasing. And consequently, the demand for case management services, home delivered meals has grown.

Among DFTA's accomplishments in Fiscal Year 15, are the implementation of Grandparent Resource Center Outreach Initiative in NYCHA developments; the reduction of case management caseloads; the integration of a bill payer program; the administration of New York Connects; and the

procurement of elder abuse prevention and
intervention services; and the release recently of a
concept paper for transportation services.

DFTA's Grandparent Resource Center
established in 1994 and the first of its kind in the
nation provides information, assistance and
supportive services to older adults who are raising
grandchildren and other young relatives. As I
referenced earlier, the GRC Program expanded last
July under the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood
Safety. In order to serve some of the neediest
kinship caregiver families in 15 NYCHA developments.
Through this initiative, the GRC Community Advocates
work with the residents and kinship caregivers for
children under 18 years old providing information,
education, trainings, and peer support for children
raising children. [coughs] I'm sorry, for
grandparents raising children. The program also
serves as a resource link for senior New York City
residents to access services for older adults. The
NYCHA developments include Brownsville, Bushwick,
Ingersoll, Red Hook, Tompkins, Van Dyke in Brooklyn,
Polo Grounds, Saint Nicholas, and Wagner in

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Manhattan, the Queensbridge in Queens, and Stapleton
in Staten Island.

Reducing high case management caseloads
has been a priority for DFTA. The additional \$2.6
million for case management services this past fiscal
year helped bring caseloads down closer to 65 per
case manager. Previously, caseloads were nearly 80
per case manager, and we are continuously look for
creative ways to decrease and manage caseloads. The
Bill Payer Program is now integrated into DFTA's Case
Management system, and permanently funded. Screened
and trained program volunteers assist low-income
older adults with monthly bill paying tasks. The
volunteers meeting one-on-one with seniors in their
own homes, and help them organize documents; create
and follow a budget; balance their checkbooks; and
write checks. Senior volunteers sign the checks and
assist the senior with making financial decisions.
Volunteers also determine if the senior might be
eligible for benefits and entitlements such as the
Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption or SCRIE. The
Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program or SNAP,
and the Home Energy Assistance Program, HEAP.

New York Connects is a statewide locally based point of entry systems that provides one-stop access to free, objective, and comprehensive information and assistance on long-term care services and support for people regardless of age, disability or diagnosis. The strength of New York Connects network is the rollout of the No Wrongdoer Single Entry Point system, which allows access to more than 19 different services regardless of payment source. In New York City, DFTA will have oversight and monitoring responsibility as the local administration agency for New York Connects. In this role, DFTA will be working with the New York City Human Resources Administration, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities and other stakeholders to establish a no wrong doer hub. This hub will provide information on long-term care services and supports, and connection to community resources; screening assistance; coordination and application for public benefits; and linkage to comprehensive assessments process for all populations as appropriate. And DFTA has received \$6.8 million to launch New York Connects locally.

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Last October, DFTA issued a request for proposal for an elder abuse prevention and intervention services. The Elder Abuse Services Program has a dual mission. First, assisting and ensuring the safety of older adults age 60 and over who have been abused. And secondly, to prevent further abuse by raising awareness of these issues through outreach and education to individuals and group. The selected providers are: Neighborhood Self-Help By Older Persons Project in the Bronx; JASA or Jewish Association Serving the Aged for Brooklyn and Queens; the Carter Burden Center for the Aging in Manhattan; and the Community Agency for Senior Citizens or CASC for Staten Island. These providers will continue to offer services such as case assistance, emergency shelter referrals, safety planning, legal advocacy, support groups, medical referrals, financial assistance, and educational workshops. The contracts are expected to start this July.

In advance of the forthcoming Transportation Services RFP, the Department a concept paper last month. Currently, DFTA sponsors individual transportation, which assists seniors in

getting to and from places they need to go in their communities. DFTA also funds group transportation to enhance community engagement for older adults by offering recreational, social, and educational trips. The concept paper highlights some of defined and developing parameters; expectations and standards for transportation programs funded by DFTA. It is our plan to test new transportation models that will explore the technologies of today to broaden the scope and increase the efficiency of a very limited service.

We will be accepting comments from interested parties until 5:00 p.m. on April 16th 2015. DFTA plans to take into consideration suggestions and comments on crafting the RFP for the solicitation of transportation. And we expect to issue this solicitation this summer for contracts beginning July of 2016. I would like to thank you for this opportunity to testify about DFTA's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2016, and I look forward to continuing the partnership with the City Council in these efforts. And I am pleased to answer any questions that you might have.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, Commissioner. We've been joined by Council Member Rodriguez from Manhattan. We're going to start off with some questions. I'm going to start off with a couple, and then I'm going to pass it on to my colleagues. So, Commissioner, from your testimony, last year was the first time that DFTA has gotten more money, right?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So we're on track back to where DFTA used to be. So what is DFTA's long-term strategy in addressing the needs of seniors in this city? Especially, which programs would the agency like to expand or create?

SERGEANT-A-ARMS: [of mic] [interposing]
Quiet down.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: What is your wish list?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Oh, my wish list? [laughter] Well, you know, it's not reflected necessarily as this is just a Preliminary Budget so we're hoping that some of these--of the wish list items will be realized in the Executive Budget. But my wish list, of course, includes expanding case

management, and strengthening senior centers. And continuing to build back the infrastructure that was pretty much decimated over the last decade in senior services.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Now, ideally, how much--how much more money would the agency need to do what you're talking about, to really go back and fix--rebuild the infrastructure. And also to expand some of these programs. I mean \$257 million is kind of small, right comparatively to other agencies?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Relative to other agencies it's small, but it leverages a great deal. And, of course, we were always looking for other opportunities to expand programming to seniors. And we're hoping that this would be reflected in the Executive Budget.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, in my conversation with the Mayor when he was doing his presentation, I did ask him. I said, when are you going to baseline all this new money that we got so we could fight for more? And said, well, in the Executive Budget. So I'm going to--we're going to make sure that a lot of the programs that you talked about will be included in the Executive Budget. I

1 know some of my colleagues are going to ask about
2 NORC. The other question I have is that we just
3 recently passed, the end of last year, we passed the
4 Bill on Social Adult Day Care. So how much is DFTA
5 estimating it would cost for the agency to regulate
6 these pop-up social adult day cares as required by
7 the law, and when do you think that this funding will
8 be added to your budget?
9

10 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We're taking a
11 wait-and-see approach. We're still writing the rules
12 for that bill, and once it's enforced, we'll be
13 asking naturally for some funding. But we don't
14 know. We're estimating it might be half million. It
15 may be more than that, but we're going to take a
16 wait-and-see and very judicious on that--on that
17 budget ask.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, because we have
19 to make sure that the money is included in the budget
20 because we want to make sure that we could implement
21 this law because we need to regulate the social
22 adult day care that's been popping up all over the
23 city. I'm going to turn it over to some of my
24 colleagues who have questions, and I can come back
25

and ask more. Council Member Rose. I know you have questions about Long Island.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [laughs] Yeah, I do have questions about Staten Island, and Council Member thank you so much because often times I feel that our voice isn't heard. And that, you know, there is a dearth of services on Staten Island, or that I am now-- My focus is trying to bring the level of services for my seniors to a comparable level of the other boroughs. And so, you know, one my really important priorities has been the NORC, and the fact that Staten Island now does not have one. And I know that there was a planning grant that was put into the last budget period. So I was wondering what is the status of the NORC--the NORC Planning Grant for Staten Island? And does the budget reflect any outcome for us? And yeah, could you sort of give me the status for that?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Well, thankfully that work is well underway. There was money in last year's budget to do an evaluation of Staten Island. And we awarded a contract to CRE, which is Community Resource Exchange, which is doing a very comprehensive analysis of Staten Island. They will

determine for us, and make a recommendation as which areas in Staten Island would be conducive for a NORC. So they're out interviewing stakeholders, looking at the demographics. They've gathered quite a bit of information, and that final report is due by the end of this fiscal year.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And has there been any discussion in modifying the program in a way that could serve neighborhood in Staten Island that don't have condensed buildings, but rather, you know, possess a sprawl of, you know, senior occupied single-family homes.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Correct. Staten Island is unique in that sense, and yes that is part of the planning process. So they will be looking different models and make a recommendation.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And I know right now NORCs do not apply to senior citizen housing, specific senior citizen housing like NYCHA facilities. Is it possible to have that conversation? Because in Staten Island, we have identified senior housing, but it falls into that category of NYCHA funded or private funded. So--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing]
Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: --I--I really would
like to take a comprehensive look at Staten Island--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing]
Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: --where our senior
population really is residing, and to tweak the
programs so that it fits those--those communities.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes. Thank you,
Council Member Rose. Just as a point of
clarification, there are several NORCs in other
borough that are in NYCHA buildings, and serve NYCHA
residences. There was at one time a Requirement that
a NORC would constitute a NORC. Or the definition of
a NORC could not be a building that was built
specifically for seniors. So, it was more of an
aging in place model. So it became sort of a senior
residence just by virtue of the fact that people
moved in decades ago, and they aged in place. So
that is one of the reasons why it's--you won't see a
NORC necessarily in a senior housing as we know it.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I would love to--

1
2 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing]
3 That's not to say that in the future--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] I
5 would like to have that conversation and see if, you
6 know, we can discuss the--maybe the validity of
7 looking at, you know, a different model--

8 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] Uh-
9 huh. I agree.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: --to included that
11 housing. And one of the unintentional or unintended
12 consequences of baselining is the RFP process. And
13 some groups that traditionally provided services may
14 not be selected. So, are you providing technical
15 assistance or other support for groups that have
16 traditionally provided these services so that they
17 can be competitive for--for these grants that are now
18 being given out by RFP?

19 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Uh-huh. We--the
20 Department provides technical assistance to our
21 grantees that currently hold contracts. And we see,
22 you know, there may be a point in the evolution of
23 that particular agency where stumble a bit for
24 whatever reason. An executive director may leave.
25 There may be some dissention amongst the ranks, and

we will provide technical support and assistance when necessary. And then it's up to the agency basically to take it from there. We have 600 contracted agencies. We couldn't possibly be out there helping every single agency do their job. But when they stumble, we try to help them and provide that assistance.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And it--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing]
Unfortunately, there is so much need so the RFP process is quite competitive. So it is a matter of selection.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay, and social day care. On Staten Island I've seen a proliferation of social adult day care. And right now they're not really regulated by State law, if they're not directly funded by the City. So, how much is DFTA estimating it would cost the agency to regulate the social adult day care centers as required by the law?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Well, we're taking a wait-and-see approach to this because we don't know the level of complaints. And we're--we're just sort of guessing that the majority of those complaints will come when that law is instituted. And over time

may dissipate the need for that. So we're really taking a wait-and-see approach.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So you have not estimated amount that's being considered--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] I mean we have--we've--we've--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: --with this regulation?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We're looking at other programs to see and benchmark. I mean similar enforcement programs have been put in place, and that's between 250 and half a million. But yet we have not made that ask yet.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And when--what's your timeline for adding this funding to the DFTA budget?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: If funding is added, it would be in the Executive Budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay, and you mentioned that you're doing a study now for transportation sort of to enhance transportation for seniors and senior programming. Is there any conversation with the MTA about adding Access-A-Ride to this program, or just improving Access-A-Ride so

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that, you know, seniors can access programs and
appointments--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: --in a timely
manner?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Right. The
Department does not have any oversight authority over
the MTA--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] I
know that.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: --and Access-A-
Ride, but that is a frequent mantra about the
complaints and the unreliability of Access-A-Ride.
we've been having those discussions vis-à-vis the
Taxi and Limousine, and my fellow commissioners. And
they are in conversation with MTA and looking at all
kinds of alternatives. So I think that this
transportation RFP may see some creative ways to do a
small amount of transportation relative to the
Paratransit system. And, by no means can you even
compare the funding and the ability to move seniors
around and people with disabilities as the Access-A-
Ride program and the MTA's budget as compared to

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3 DFTA. But those conversations are--haven't--haven't
4 happened. [sic]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] How
6 will they access these--these transportation
7 programs? Will it be through senior centers?
8 Through service providers who are providing services
9 currently, or--

10 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] All
11 of the above.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: All of the above?

13 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Uh-huh.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: You're welcome.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you, Madam
17 Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you Council
19 Member Rose. We're also joined by Council Member
20 Treyger. I'm going to call Council Member Vallone
21 next to ask some questions focusing on senior
22 centers. But Commissioner, in your--in your remarks
23 I only saw one priority, right. I mean you talked
24 about the priority for 2016 as the geriatric mental
25 health. And I know that the first lady--is taking
leadership on that, visiting the centers in my

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district and across the city. And that's great, but we want to see other priorities, and some of them-- and one of them is senior centers. We want to make sure those senior centers are adequately funded.

Right, Council Member Vallone.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: That's a very good introduction.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, next question.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: That's why we make such a great team. See why? Well, first off, I want to thank the--all of the people who came today and the advocates, and those who fight for our seniors every day. All the way up in the balcony, too, we thank you. And Commissioner, sometimes I feel like we're the kids in class who came to class, but get yelled out because of the kids who didn't come to class. So, I mean you're our link to the Administration.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So a lot of this is our hope that things will be picked up as times goes on before the final budget. So, therefore, I hope and quite a bit of it lies with you. I think that's your key sentence that you have that you say as the

agency prepared for the aging--aging boom, and the meeting needs of the growing and diverse population of older New Yorkers, it is our hope that resources will meet or exceed the increasing demand. But I think therein lies the problem because we ask today on how much of that hope will become reality, and how much of what is stated today will be increased. Whether we fight for schools or senior centers. So many of the council members are disheartened that it comes out of our budgets to do these things. I mean it's our belief that the Administration and the City should do these things is right. I mean that's our starting point. When we all saw the budget, we were all obviously upset that there was no new money. And this was the only agency that didn't pick it up. With the population that's growing, it's hard for the average person to say with the same amount of money we're going to do even more. I mean we do it at my house everyday, but, you know, with the City it's a little bit--a little bit different. Last year we did quite a bit with case manager. So are you satisfied with the funding that was increased last year to keep it at 65 for a case manager, or do we have to do better on that?

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COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Well, I'm--I'm
never completely satisfied, but I am satisfied that
it had its intended consequence of reducing caseloads
down to or nearly down to 65 per case manager. So I
think that that's a huge accomplishment. So I think
the Council for that. However, we also have 2,000
older adults on the wait list. So we will be
advocating for more money in order to serve people on
our wait list, and build--build back the
infrastructure of our case management programs.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: The 2,000 is that
just for this last past year?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: That's in the past
year. It's current.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Is that--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] It's
current and--

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: --steady with our
past increases or--?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: That's a growing--
it's a growing wait list, and, you know, wait lists
can be argued back and forth. Not every case
management agency unfortunately even keeps a wait
list in a triage, and--and refer to other agencies,

and whatnot or not keep one at all. So, that's a conservative number of 2,000. So yes, we will be asking for additional resources--

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [interposing] Well, I think that's a--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: --in order to cover that wait list.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: It's one of those indicator numbers I think that we can use--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: --to say hey things are coming, things are changing, and we have an increase.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So what is the longest then a senior will wait before action is taken?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Well, they-- generally they're required to have some telephone conversation with a senior every two months while they're on the wait list. And many of them do a very good job of triaging. So if there's an emergency situation or a very high needs client, they will

generally put that person at the top of the list. So two months would be the longest a senior would go without some type of human contact with a case management agency, a case manager.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, I think then we need to do more work on getting those numbers down. Two months could be critical in someone facing--depending on what they're facing. And I know-- Thank you for your help on the task force that's addressing all that also. In fiscal last year the senior centers in the baseline funding there was a lot of conversation going back and forth on the different areas that we could ask for additional funding. Some of it happened. Some of it didn't. Some of those that we're fighting for were space costs, transportation costs, reimbursement plans for the meals. Reallocating an additional \$20 million in DFTA to help support those core services. So what is your plan on asking the Administration for increasing this baseline funding for our senior centers; the space costs; transportation costs. Giving up the baseline funding doesn't really adequately address all those needs?

1
2 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: That's correct.
3 So this is the Preliminary Budget, and we remain
4 hopeful that some of that or all of that will be
5 reflected in the Executive Budget.

6 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [laughs] That's a
7 lot of hope going out there.

8 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We're doing a lot
9 of praying.

10 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [laughs] We're
11 going to need some numbers on that. So I mean--

12 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing]
13 Yeah.

14 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: --this gets back to
15 Council Member Chin's original question. If that
16 wish list, hope list comes in, what would be the
17 additional funding that you think would come in?
18 What are we fighting for?

19 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We're for expanded
20 resources. So not only the baseline funding, but
21 additional resources to help us with everything that
22 we do, senior centers, NORCs, home care wait lists,
23 case management wait lists. There's a--a growing
24 need as you know from the-- Just from the Baby
25 Boomers along, and the aging demographic is one

1 thing, but there is a need to build back the
2 infrastructure of DFTA programs and services.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, there's a
5 list here of pretty much everything that we're going
6 to talk about today. Case management; permeable
7 reimbursement; Meals on Wheels capacity; NORCs;
8 senior centers rent; innovative senior centers; elder
9 abuse victimization assistance; NORCs again; adult
10 day care services; six weekend congregate meals;
11 transportation; citizenship classes; social workers
12 in senior centers; caregiver support. Each one of
13 those could have their own hearing, and hours and
14 hours of testimony. And that's what so difficult--

15 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing]
16 Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: --for today because
18 we all have specific items and districts. But I
19 think this is more of a citywide approach. Everyone
20 of those for sure, and it's hard to wrap your hand
21 around any of them. Is there any of their additional
22 information you can give us beyond the hope that
23 fighting with the Executive Budget is going to give
24 us some additional funding for these?

25 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I remain hopeful.

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CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [laughs] I hope
so. All right, go ahead, Margaret.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: You can be assured
that you have a good advocate.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So Commissioner, I
mean it will help us to sort of like know the range
where we're--I mean the advocates have their numbers
and usually, you know, advocates we're asking for
really much more. But in terms of in your discussion
with the Administration what is--you know, what is
your request to them in terms of increase. Like
you're talking about there's 2,000 people on the case
management wait list. And last year we got 2.6
million. So how much more should we ask for at least
minimally to cover the wait list? Another 2.6?
Another 5?

[background comment]

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We're asking for
an additional \$3 million.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: An additional \$3
million?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: To cover the wait
list, yes.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: To cover the wait list
for case management?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And what about the
question that Council Member Vallone asked like for
senior centers. How do we help support the senior
centers, the seniors that are here today, right? And
I'm not talking--I know that Council Member Rodriguez
was asking about capital to help fix up our centers,
and-- But even just on the price for meals,
transportation, staff support. I mean a lot of the
seniors--the senior relies on volunteers, and
volunteers contribute quite a bit. I mean if we put
that into dollars and cents I think we'll be all
amazed how much volunteer time that are contributed
to the senior centers. But for the senior centers
and meals, how much more are you asking?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Well, just if I
can touch on the point about the volunteers because
it is a significant in-kind contribution, and I think
it's around half a million hours. So if you multiply
that by the minimum wage, you're talking about over
\$5 million in in-kind contribution from volunteers.
So one of DFTA's priorities in terms of programming

is to really help our sponsoring agencies leverage those volunteer opportunities, and support volunteerism. So that's been a big push in DFTA, and it will continue in the next fiscal year as well.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: That's good.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But my initial question is for senior centers. I mean last year we got an increase to support our senior centers.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So are we asking for 5% more, 10% more because in your testimony when you talked about the funding, you said \$114 million to support senior centers. So that's just basic, right? That's supporting them where they're at now, correct?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So fiscal--but going forward in the Executive Budget, how much more are we putting in that pot to help our senior centers?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Our plan is to--is to take over the NYCHA social clubs. So we'll be inheriting an additional 38 programs. And that--that ask alone is upwards of \$6 million.

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CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So you are--you are asking then for the NYCHA to take those over?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But what about the existing program? The program that we have right now?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I remain hopeful that in the Executive Budget that those senior centers--the increase in funding will be baselined.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [interposing] Well I hope so. I mean the one that we got last year that would be baselined. [laughs] Because we want more than that. I mean that's the message we're sending to the Mayor. Whatever we got last year, has to be baselined. We're not starting from last year, right? We're not starting from zero. So I mean we're there to support you.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes, I know.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Commissioner--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] And I appreciate that and--

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, and whatever you ask, we're going to be asking on top of that to make

1 sure that you get what you ask for. So I mean we
2 really have to make sure that the Administration and
3 the mayor they recognize that this is a growing
4 population. Seniors contribute so much to our city,
5 and asking, you know, more support for this center.
6 And not every senior goes to the Center. So just the
7 basics for the seniors that really needs these
8 centers, we've got to give them more support. And
9 they're getting a lot of in-kind contribution. If
10 not for those in-kind contributions of the
11 volunteers, I don't think our centers could survive.

12 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: They could not
13 survive. That I can attest to. It's a--it's
14 basically volunteer one model in our senior centers.
15 And the increase in asking for geriatric mental
16 health and a social worker in every center is an
17 important one. And it really cannot be minimized
18 because the degree to which many of our older adults
19 that we see in our senior centers, their mental
20 impairments are growing. And often times there's not
21 enough--

22 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [interposing]
23 Cowboys [sic].
24
25

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: --professional staff within the center to deal with those issues. We see depression. We see, you know, older people that experience a lot of loss, and sometimes they need some assistance. We see a lot of substance abuse, a lot of depression. We've done some work over the years on identifying those that have depression or that have mild cognitive impairments that get progressively worse. But unless you have professional staff to follow through with some intervention, identifying a need is just that. You're identifying your need but you have no--nothing to remedy it with. So we're really concentrating on addressing those mental health needs in our centers as well.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So do you have a projection if you put a social worker in every center how much that would come up to?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Approximately \$11 million.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: And that's part of your ask?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I mean I join with our Chair of all the hard work that you've done. I mean, like I said it's the kids that showed up at the class that get yelled at. You are not one of the ones that would upset up me. I mean you and your staff have been always any question we've had and any hearing we've had you've been very--fighting. We just need you to take this fight to the next level.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: You also changed I guess, which is important for the first time this year, the indicators on how you actually account for the amount of seniors coming to the senior centers. So it's not based on meals any more. It's actually based on the seniors attending. So with that change-

-

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing]

That's correct. We're able to capture numbers that we were never able to capture before because many things go on in a senior center. While meals and nutrition is important and it's something that as long as there is the senior center, they'll always

1 have meals. And that's how we're funded. That's
2 through nutrition programs through the federal
3 government partially. The number of activities in
4 the center we're able to capture with the new
5 computer based system that we have, which is, you
6 know, we've had a painful birth, but it's being used
7 nearly 100% now in our senior centers, and the
8 utilization. We get better data, we can give it back
9 to you, and use that to advocate for more resources.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So the--the data is
12 still forthcoming?

13 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: The data is there.
14 We're able to give you those numbers.

15 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Do we know like the
16 difference already in this year versus the seniors
17 based on last year with the meals?

18 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We're collecting
19 baseline data.

20 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Okay. Now you also
21 did I guess on that same line a survey for seniors on
22 whether there's demand for the six-day meal, and you
23 mentioned that.

24 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes, we do.
25

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So can we have that information on the--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] We have--there was-- You know, surprisingly, there wasn't as much demand at the time that we asked for it than I would have liked. But it's I think 59 centers that said that they would be interested in a six-day meal. So that was given out. It was implemented. A couple of surveys never came back when we--when we surveyed our provider agencies whether or not they wanted it, maybe one or two got lost in the process. And we are advocating for additional monies actually to be baselined again this year for that six-day meal.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you. That's important. I think every dollar that we can get into our centers to help them off-cost their baseline even for overhead. Sometimes we forget that that's included from their insurance, their rent. And the last thing before I--we turn it over. There is so much talk now expanding like we did last year the elder abuse programs. And it goes over such a long variety of different plans. When you talk to the district attorneys and you talk to the advocates,

it's an area that keeps growing. Whether it's
financial abuse, guardianship, you name it--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] Uh-
huh.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: --it's there. So
what is your plan on increasing or asking for
additional funds for elder abuse?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We are asking for
additional funds. We actually issued an RFP and--and
got some very well regarded sponsors, one in each
borough to carry out a more robust elder abuse
program. So we have asked for additional funds. I
believe \$2 million additional elder abuse services.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So when is the RFP,
when is the process expected to conclude, and you
actually start the--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] It's
already concluded. These new programs will be
starting this July.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: In July. Okay.
Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay. Thank you. I'm
going to ask Council Member Rodriguez, do you have a
question?

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Yes. First of all, I'd like to tell you that there's no--there's not anybody else that I have seen fighting with the Council in the Budget Administration that works so hard, and fights harder than the Chairman of this committee. So in Margaret you have someone that is really going the extra mile to be sure that we put every single dollar that is needed to maintain, and expand the program that benefit our seniors. In her approach, in our approach, is when we're talking about investing in our senior citizens what we are saying is we are investing in the generation that has built our city. So, it's all about paying back for all those decades of services that you have spent. And that's our approach. That's how much we value all the contributions that you have made, and we will always under Margaret's leadership will continue to identify other areas on how we can continue expanding the investment that we have do new. And that the future generation would do on us when we reach that age. And many of us are almost getting there. So I think that with that understanding, we know that there are many services that we've been able to maintain. Many areas where we were able to put the

1 money, restore the funding. But besides being able
2 to restore, as Margaret said, programs that are
3 important to us right now we also want to look
4 forward to the future. And I know that, you know,
5 you have a big heart. You care for the citizens, and
6 this is an area that you have done it before to
7 become a commissioner. So, we see each other as
8 allies on this.
9

10 One of my questions is again as someone
11 that my parents--my other is 84 and my father he's
12 passed also like three years ago. So both of them
13 lived those years while needing services in our city.
14 What percentage of senior citizens in New York City
15 has a space--a space where they can provide fitness
16 activities?

17 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: In our full
18 fledged senior centers many of them lack full space.
19 Especially some of the older senior centers that have
20 to do with a lot of creative programming in order to
21 move out one group and move in another group. So
22 that they can have those fitness activities. The
23 space issues it's a huge issue. When we--when we
24 release and RFP we put minimum requirements for
25 facilities. And to ensure that they have the square

footage to actually provide health and wellness activities and fitness would fall into that category. So most of them manage to do it somehow even if they don't have the space, they'll usually partner with an agency. For example, in the community that they can provide those activities. So it may be that next door there might be space. For example in a library meeting room, and they have come up with creative ways to ensure that every facility has some type of health and wellness programming.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: How much money on capital do we have right now?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Let me check.

[background conversation, pause]

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We have \$30 million in capital funding, most of which is discretionary.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Okay. I just--I just think that we have to take a different approach on how much capital we invest. Again, from both sides. From growing as an administration, and also look at all the colleagues that are here, and ask those to put capital. Because I believe that that we need to increase capital, and to see--we need to see the investment on capital to make those

facilities. To improve those facilities where senior citizens they spend a lot of hours during the day. I believe that to have top quality fit in this room, it's important. Again, I saw my father, before known to be an independent guy, spending a lot of time in the park doing things by himself. And then spending his last ten years of his life he was going to the senior center around 108 in the Barrio. So when I have visited some of the senior centers in my community, you know, that's really citywide. I just hope that we can provide the privacy that they need in those areas where they go and do some sport activity and some fitness activity. And for me, I see that particular component as important as investing on all this other. [sic] Because I think that, you know, keep our senior citizens active-- active in the sports is very important for them. So if we can continue, you know, with our Chairman and see how we can identify some areas to improve on capital. And especially be sure that the fitness area provide the privacy that they need. That it is not only like an open area in the corner when they have three or four machines. And then this sounds

1 like a great improvement that we can bring to the
2 center. [sic]

3 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We agree.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: At the local
5 level, as you know, I brought to your suggestion when
6 we met, in Northern Manhattan we have we have one of
7 the--I guess one of the best senior centers, which is
8 Ark at 174--174 between Broadway and Fort Washington.
9

10 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Uh-huh.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: And Ark is
12 located in the--in a building that was supposed to be
13 the tallest building in New York City. There is even
14 a book about the City that couldn't be. And that
15 building has like four floors in the basement, and
16 there's a whole infrastructure for the pool. And the
17 seniors in my community they don't have an indoor
18 pool in the whole community of Borough 12. And I
19 know that you were open. I know that we committed to
20 continue talking. But I would like to continue that
21 conversation with the Chairman and you, and see how
22 we're speaking to confirm [sic] our senior center and
23 sort of advancing an institution in our community and
24 in the city. We should be able to identify the
25

possibility to provide a pool at that senior center
at Ark at 174.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: So I look forward
to realizing the vision.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]
Thank you. My last question.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Seniors love--love
their aquatic events. When they have access to a
facility and access to swimming, they utilize that a
great deal. So that I know. So we look forward to
working with you and the sponsors up in the Bronx--

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]
Great.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: --or up in
Northern Manhattan to get that done.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Great. My
last questions is about those--the senior seniors in
the city has all the resources to--I mean the human
resources to coordinate initiatives so that every
senior citizen that can take advantage of a SCRIE
gave all the information? And do we have a plan? Do
we know how many senior citizens who are enrolled in
our senior centers what percentage that qualify are
taking advantage of the SCRIE program?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I think that they have better access to someone who is going to sit down with them either vis-à-vis our volunteers that have been trained and deployed to those centers. There's been a huge effort in this past year to enroll seniors in benefit programs. HRA is doing a great deal of work in that regard as is the Medicaid Rights Center. We've gotten some foundation funding with Samuels Foundation, and we have resources and have been doing along with other agencies a full court press around signing up for benefits. Again, it gets back to the human resources in centers. That should be given that once a client is registered or walks through the doors of the senior center if there are some benefits that they're entitled to, they should get those benefits. So certainly there's--there should always be a knowledgeable person either on staff or that is deployed there from either a volunteer or from the Department. So, I'm more confident that our senior center members have access to those resources. But not necessarily the general public. And we are doing more work in that regard, and will continue that throughout this year.

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COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: You're welcome.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, and we've
been joined by Council Member Deutsch from Brooklyn.
Next is Council Member Koslowitz.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Thank you.
The meals, the extra meal on the weekend, how is that
going and how many senior centers have applied for
it.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We surveyed
everyone of our 250 senior centers, and 59 came back
that they would like to participate in that program.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Do you have
the senior centers that applied let say in Forest
Hills and Rego Park, if any?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We could get that
information to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Okay. I would
appreciate that.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Also, how many
frozen meals are given out?

1 [background comments]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: And also like
3 where are they getting them?

4 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: In general or for
5 those six meals?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: No, general.

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WANG: [off mic]
8 About 2,000 of those meals are--are frozen.

9 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Home delivered
10 meals it's 2,000 I'm being told.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: 2,000--

12 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] A
13 day, a day.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: --a day frozen
15 meals?

16 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: And where--
18 where is that given?

19 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I would say I
20 don't know. Well, mostly in the Bronx, right.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: And how is
22 that working out?

23 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: That's working out
24 very well, and from my going around to different
25

centers and speaking to seniors, they actually prefer frozen meals. So that number will continue to grow.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: What about the care that is given to a senior who doesn't get frozen meals that someone knocks on their door, and they know if the person is okay.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: But a frozen meal is--is just that. It's a meal. So if someone needs some human contact, there are other ways that they can get human contact. So I'm a big proponent of frozen meals for those that choose a frozen meal, right. So that's another issue is if someone is socially isolated, and they need that contact, there may be other ways to get that accomplished other than, you know, by one meal at a time having somebody knock on the door. That is important for a small number of seniors, but not for everyone. So it's a one-size-fits-all approach, and I think there is a room--there is room in our repertoire for frozen meals.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: How many meals total are given out, home delivered meals? [coughs]

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: 17,600 meals are delivered daily each day.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: So 2,000 out
of that number gets the frozen meals?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: That's correct.
That's right.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: And then the
ones, the remaining 15,600 get regular meals
delivered to them daily.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: One meal at a
time. Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Daily?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Daily. Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: So you don't
think that the other 2,000 people deserve that
contact? I remember when frozen meals started, and I
really thought it was a very, very bad idea.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] Oh,
well--

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Because a lot
of seniors live alone. I know where I live there are
a lot of seniors who are alone. [coughs] And they
have no contact. Their family doesn't live close to
them. I have like three seniors in my building--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] Uh-
huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: --that are
over 90 years old.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: And they're
alone, and they don't get frozen meals, but I'm sure
in other places there are seniors who are, you know,
older--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing]
Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: --and don't
have family living near them that could use that
human--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Right, and--and
there are other ways to achieve that end. I think
that, you know--

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: [interposing]
How?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Many, many other
ways, friendly visiting. There are ways to get--if--
if they are able to, to go out to a senior center,
and to connect with another human being. Now, I--I--

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: [interposing]
But these seniors who get homebound meals--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: --don't get out. They're home. They don't get out.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Some of them are and some of them are not. And I would respectfully disagree only because it's the senior's choice. Every senior has a choice whether they want a hot meal at this point in time or a frozen meal. And those that get frozen meals choose to get frozen meals, and that's their preference. So there will come a day, hopefully in the future, that the vision is every senior will have choice as to what they want to eat, when they want to eat it. And be delivered in a method that is conducive to serving many more people instead of one hot meal at a time. And I'm-- and I'm going out on a limb here because I know that in the Bronx that was not popular. But it's a decade and a half later, and we're learning that people do want choice and that they--they would like to choose. For example, if it's Tuesday and they feel like meatloaf, they can take it out and defrost meat loaf. And not just 17,000 people eating the same meal because that's what the home delivered meal provider

1 is cooking that day. So I think that there room in
2 the inn for everyone, and hopefully we'll be able to
3 advance using some of the technologies that are
4 available today where seniors can actually choose
5 what their menu is. But that's for future
6 discussions. So what I'm saying is a senior is
7 assessed, and it's their choice. So whoever is
8 getting a frozen meal it's because they choose to at
9 this point in time.
10

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Well, when the
12 program started, and the first place it started was
13 the Bronx, the people had no choice.

14 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I know.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: They were
16 given frozen meals.

17 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: So they really
19 had no choice. Maybe they didn't change, but they
20 had no choice.

21 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: You're correct.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I remember I
23 was fighting that.

24 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I remember I went
25 through that as well. So, at this--at this point in

time and for the last several years, they've had that
choice so--

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Okay, it's--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing]
Yeah, it's--it's growing. It's getting more popular.
I realize that at one time it was--we were-we were--
many of us were projecting our own desires and
preferences on the seniors who taught us differently
that many of them really do prefer a frozen meal.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Okay, I mean I
can go on for a long time. thank you.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [laughs] Let's not
argue over that. We've got bigger--bigger things.
Next we have Council Member Treyger followed by
Council Member Rose. She has another question.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you, Chair
Chin and as well to Chair Vallone for really doing
outstanding work on--on this critical issue in our
city. It's a moral issue, and it's the right thing
to do to advocate for our seniors. Commissioner, we--
-I chair a different committee, and Recovery and
Resiliency, and we heard some very disheartening
testimony from people about the evacuations that took

place post-Sandy, during Sandy, and after Sandy where seniors were literally dumped at the door of a hospital without any types of name tags. Without any types of notice of what medical they're on, and that is when the city at that time issued an, you know, an evacuation order and so forth. I know that you had mentioned at previous hearings that there have been some studies done. There has been a report issued. There's been some discussions with the OEM. What steps have been taken to make sure that that never happens again where literally I would say hundreds if not thousands of seniors were just dumped at the doors of hospitals without any types name tags, notifications or information about what services or what medication they need. What has the City done to have better coordination with our senior care providers in the event of a future emergency?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I'm not an expert on disaster management by any means, and our Assistant Commissioner for Disaster Management is not here. But I know from the table top exercises that I have attended over at OEM that they have taken many of those things into consideration in terms of medication management. And it's unfortunate that

people are brought into hospitals. And I know the Department of Health now has a registry for seniors especially if they're on life support, and things like that. So this is being managed. I just can't speak as an expert--

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: [interposing]
Right and this is--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: --when I have spoken with you.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: --of course, not on you because you were not there at the time as Commissioner, and I just-- And the hospitals are not saying we're not going to serve them, but they're saying tell us who they are. Tell us what their needs are.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And that--that was not responsible planning just to dump people off and not even know their name, contact information and whatnot. And this came out of hearings that we held separately from the committee, and I just wanted to make sure that I bring it to your attention, and that-- Has OEM reached out to you, and are they having conversations with you and making sure that

these things don't happen again? Is that at least happening now?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes, and I--we have an Assistant Commissioner who does this, you know, five days a week, [coughs] 40 hours a week. This is all she--she works on is disaster management.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right, and I imagine as far--for the senior providers they need capacity building on this. They need some information sharing and training. Are there resources available for senior providers to make sure that everyone is on the same page, and we're better prepared for future emergencies?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We do have a staff at DFTA that go around to senior programs, and teach them on emergency management procedures and policy.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And do you feel that that's sufficient?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: At this moment in time it is.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: All right.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: But--but, you know, we have the DFTA Service Network is not the Nursing Home Network, and it's not necessarily

touching all of the seniors that can--you know that live in the City of New York. There's 1.4 million seniors. So is it sufficient to work with the programs that we currently have? Yes. Is it sufficient to work with every single senior in the city? No.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And the reason why I mentioned this is because my district and others we--we have a significant number of senior citizens over in our districts. In addition, we're one of the most vulnerable areas prone to emergencies as far as coastal storms and floods and other types of things. And whenever I hear talk of mandatory evacuations, or evacuations and emergency planning, I think we really need to make sure that--that we're on the same page and that we're much better prepared. And that does not just involve DFTA, by the way. I mean that also involves other agencies here as well. I just want to be clear.

Commissioner, a few months back this committee held a hearing about age-friendly district initiatives. I wanted to know what's the status of that Age-Friendly District Initiative. Where are we at?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: The vision, of course, is to have an Age-Friendly district in every City Council district. And that commission is being receipted, and you'll be hearing a lot more about it. I know the Council issued a letter--the Speaker of the Council and--and Chairperson Chin I saw a letter last week about Age-Friendly. And reviewing the 50 initiatives that were formerly on that Age-Friendly listing and to see which ones can be purged. Which ones can be added, and I know there is an ask for some additional resources that at least, what ten Council Districts can be dealt with this year in terms of identifying projects for Age-Friendly districts in those Council Districts.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So is this initiative still alive?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: It's getting resurrected. Someone is resuscitating it as we speak.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Is that being done at the admin side, Council side, both?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: It's being done by Council. It's being done by the New York Academy of

Medicine with lead from the Council I believe and
DFTA as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And there will
only be ten districts chosen, is that correct?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Well, I think it's
going to be a rollout. I don't think that there's
the wherewithal to do every single Council District
all at once.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: All right.
Well, these are conversations we should definitely be
continuing to have. Also, I'll bring--Council Member
Koslowitz mentioned I think a very important point
about, you know, we certainly have to support and do
more for our seniors visiting senior centers. There
is no question about that. But do you have data on
how many--and this is including or not including
those who might be on the program to get homebound
meals. How many homebound seniors do we have in New
York City? Do we have data on that as far as--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I couldn't
possibly give you exact numbers--

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: [interposing]
Right.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: --of how many
homebound seniors we have.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: It also depends on
how you define homebound.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right. Meaning
that they have a disability. They for whatever
reason cannot--they're not physically well or could
emotionally or mentally I'm not sure well. But
people that are receiving really care at home. Do
you have any figures on that?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: No, we can only
tell you who's being--receiving care in the DFTA
Network.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Not necessarily--I
mean there are over--you know, there's private care
providers. There's Medicaid funded providers.
There's the DFTA network, and there's-- Most of it is
really provided by--by family caregivers. So if we
ever took family caregivers out of the equation, we'd
really be--have a big issue on our hands.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: [interposing]
Well, I thin you--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Because those
provide, you know, foremost.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I think you hit
it on the nail because that's what that's about, the
family caregivers, volunteer caregivers, people who
check in. But I do think that they deserve our
support, and our help as well. Because I--I believe
that there are many people that we have not been able
to identify and reach that are at home not aware of
all these services that they are actually entitled to
and available to them. And so, I think that we need
to really do a better job as far as resources and
support. And again, I know that you are an advocate
on this. I know that we're not speaking against each
other here. We're on the same page. But we really
need to step up here. Because I believe that there
are countless numbers of seniors who are not visiting
the senior centers for whatever reason, and I worry
about them, too.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes, I do as well,
and, you know, let's--let's be honest. Not every
senior wants to go to a senior center, and we--we
serve a small segment of that senior population. But
it's a very important segment. And the demographics

1 show that the seniors that go to centers are the ones
2 that really need to go to centers for various
3 reasons. So, I couldn't agree with you more, but I
4 think that, you know, there's a continuum of interest
5 in terms of seniors, and some like-- You know, as my
6 dad says, you know, I wouldn't be caught dead in a
7 senior center. That's only because he's never been
8 to one, and he doesn't know how great they are. But
9 certainly, you know, we need to reach seniors
10 especially those that are homebound and socially
11 isolated. And we need to do a better job.
12 Therefore, more resources into this network is
13 extremely important. So thank you for bringing that
14 to our attention.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you and
17 just two quick--more quick points. Before Council
18 Member Ydanis Rodriguez mentioned about capital
19 budget. You mentioned that most of it is
20 discretionary. Describe to me where the line ends as
21 far as what DFTA is responsible for, and what a
22 landlord or owner of a property is responsible for as
23 far as the maintenance and upkeep of a physical
24 structure?

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COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We have 250 centers, and we have 250 permutations on the theme. It all depends on how the lease is negotiated, when it was negotiated, and the type of landlord. Some are very good about it. Some are third-party leases, or what we call a triple net leases where the department or the sponsoring agency is responsible for any repairs that need to be done. Generally, it's the internal and external. So if it's internal to the center, it's the center that needs to fix it. If it's in the walls or on the external--exterior, the envelope as they say, it's generally the landlord. But there are exceptions to all of those. So there is no one--one type of lease. Although there is a facilities unit at the department that helps negotiate those leases, but a lot of them are legacy leases as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And have you-- I'm sure the answer is yes. So how many cases have you encountered? Is there an estimated number of landlords that have just been in non-compliance with their end--end of the lease leaving seniors vulnerable and unsafe?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: There are many
less than stellar landlords in the equation yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Yeah, and I
think that we really need to put pressure and expose
them because they are leaving people in a very
vulnerable and unsafe conditions. I speak of
obviously in my district as well. But, you know, we--
the City has a list of some of the worst landlords
in the City of New York. Well, if they're also
leaving our seniors unsafe and vulnerable, we should
know that, too. Because these are the same people
who apply for programs and funding for other things.
And we should keep a registry for our own records to
make sure that they do not get any additional city
benefits until they cure all violations that leave
our seniors at risk. And I'll close by saying,
Commissioner and, of course, I'll speak up for my
district here again. The areas, communities of
Bensonhurst, Graves End and even up to Council
Deutsch's area at Sheepshead Bay these are-- They are
tremendously growing Asian-American communities,
really booming. And one of the things that we've
identified I think is the need for a NORC there as
well. Because whenever I visit events and senior

centers there, it is standing room only. Standing room only. And I really believe that we do have the metrics and meet the criteria of an additional NORC there in Southern Brooklyn. And I would like to work with your office to discuss that further. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. I think one point I wanted to add is that Commissioner because a couple of council members asked about homebound seniors. And I know that among the advocates and providers I met with Selfhelp, and they tried to tell me about their innovative center where they have virtual centers to really reach the homebound seniors. So in the budget are you looking at requesting more funding for innovation centers, and all new senior centers?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: In terms of innovative centers, no we're not asking for additional funding for innovative senior centers. Only because every center needs additional fund. So we would like every center to be an innovative center, and get just a dignified amount of baseline funding. So that they can run, and have the

opportunities that other centers have. And, you know, like was brought up, it is basically about space. And it's about money. So, all--all of our centers need additional resources. So we're really concentrating on that. And serving some underserved groups that, you know, are bursting at the seams that we need to address the new New Yorkers. And at some point in time we'll be focusing our energy on getting funding, and advocating for funding. So that we can serve new groups.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And we agree with you that every center needs more money, and we have a lot of centers that are innovative at doing creating things. They're just not called innovative centers, and didn't get the funding. It might have been a way to start some new senior center with that funding. And hopefully, we can get more money to the centers. Council Member Rose, do you have a follow-up question? Council Member?

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Council Member Chin, we were on the same page. My original question was about the innovative center. But I also would like to ask the Commissioner about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. It's been under-

enrolled in that I know that when Commissioner Banks testified before us, he talked about putting together a partnership where they would do outreach to 100,000 senior who have Medicaid but not SNAP. So could you give us an update on how many seniors are currently enrolled in SNAP, and how many seniors are estimated to be eligible for the SNAP benefit, but not enrolled?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I know that HRA has been doing a lot of work in this regard, as has DFTA staff. So I don't have those numbers. HRA does have them, and we can get them to you. But I think the important piece is that they're for the first time doing targeted outreach by getting and using other lists that they know vis-à-vis that an X number of seniors are eligible for SNAP. And, they're doing some direct mail to their homes. So those lists have been made available through some collaboration between agencies.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And since there seems to be such a large number who are eligible, but are not enrolled in that program, do you think that that's justification to reinstate the weekend meals

based on the fact that people are not taking
advantage of the SNAP reduction?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: You know what, I
wouldn't draw a direct conclusion because we don't
know exactly why they're not taking advantage of it.
But I know that there are people who are eligible for
SNAP and we need to really educate them that they are
able to do that, and provide the assistance that they
need. So there is some effort in those particular
senior centers that have been identified with the
biggest demographics of conceivably eligible or
potentially eligible seniors. So there's an
initiative. I think there are 15 senior centers
involved with HRA, and other agencies and the
foundations. So we're doing a full court press in
those centers in particular. So I don't know, you
know, this is a trend that's been going on for a
number of years. So I can't make the direct
correlation.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So any--anything
that you've seen that would justify reinstating the
weekend meals?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: There is a weekend
meal in terms of a congregate meal, and our seniors

in the home delivered meals program do have access to home--to weekend meals vis-à-vis City meals who provides them and pays for those weekend meals.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And are they the seniors that traditionally get the meals, the full week?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And I know you provide emergency meals on weekends if someone is in need of it?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: We have a wonderful collaboration with City Meals on Wheels, and DFTA pays for and delivers meals Monday through Friday, and then again on weekends with a--with the funding from City Meals on Wheels who also does emergency meals and holiday meals. So they've been a terrific partner, and they've been doing a lot of emergency meals around every single snowstorm that we've had. And our staff have been terrific in terms of going out and delivering extra meals and anticipating snowstorms, and making it as easy as possible for seniors and as safe as possible. So that in the event of a snow storm that they don't have to get to the store. And everyone was very well

served that's on our program this winter. So I'd like to congratulate all of those hardworking home delivered meals providers and drivers that really went above and beyond the call of duty.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Does any part of your budget contribute to the City Meals on Wheels Program?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: It's not a City Meals on Wheels Program. It's a DFTA Meals on Wheels Program that City Meals provides funding so that we can leverage what it is that we do.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: So--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay, and--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] We do--we do-- Our Assistant Commissioner is whispering in my ear [laughs] that we pay for City Meals on Wheels. We contribute to their administrative costs.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And what would that amount be?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: \$1.8 million.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And--and you've requested that amount in this budget also, or an increase?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: That--that amount in particular is baseline. What we are asking for is extra funding for overutilization of meals. So that we can build capacity at the rate of 5%. So as we build capacity, there is some recognition that they will need additional admin money as well, because we work hand in glove.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you so much.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Next, Council Member Deutsch.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you--thank you, Chair. First of all, I'd like to commend you, Commissioner, for all that you do. You've--you've been working very closely with our office. And in regards to Age-Friendly liked today I had my second SCOPE meeting in my district. And I'm going to have a third one I believe next week. And then in mid-April I'll be having a town hall meeting with the Age-Friendly with the senior citizens in my community. So I want to commend you and your staff and Age-Friendly New York in working with my office. In addition, I want to thank your staff. I did have a Caregivers Forum about a month ago where it was

1 well attended by seniors. And a matter of fact, the
2 Speaker of the City Council attended the Caregivers
3 Forum. And I felt it was very beneficial for the
4 people to get information, as much information as
5 possible. You have many caregivers in my district
6 and the neighboring districts. So I want to thank
7 you for that.
8

9 On another note, just a little over 40
10 hours ago, I had a tragic fire my district where
11 seven young--seven young children perished.
12 Basically, almost the entire family was taken away
13 from the community, from their friends, from the
14 schools. And we all--we all feel it's not just my
15 community. It's not just my district. It's every--
16 every member, every resident of the City of New York
17 felt this. And when we talk about seniors and you're
18 talking, you're speaking about caregivers, you know
19 the grandparents who take care of the grandchild or
20 just a senior living alone, I would like to see more
21 preventive measures and outreach. Because no one
22 know our seniors better than the organizations, the
23 community centers, the NORCs in the district. And
24 one senior may not have a sense of smell. Another
25 may not see well, and no one knows these seniors

1 better than the people working with them each and
2 every day. When you talk about the good meals, the
3 hot meals, the cold meals and everything else nothing
4 means anything if we don't protect our seniors where
5 they reside.
6

7 So, what I'm asking is if we could look
8 into or if you would work with the City Council to
9 have something in the funding for this year, this
10 fiscal year to make sure that there are proper smoke
11 detectors. If a senior is hard of hearing, there
12 should be a different type of smoke detector where
13 they would be able to, if they're hearing impaired.
14 We have to make sure that our seniors are well
15 protected where they reside. I don't want to see
16 another fatality, and we've been through enough the
17 last 24 to 36 hours. And this is something I'm
18 looking to advocate for this fiscal year. I hope,
19 you know, you can work with us and my colleagues and
20 the City Council to see whatever preventive tools
21 that we can give to our senior population we should
22 do. Tomorrow evening I had a pre-arranged fire safety
23 event in my district, which is going to be tomorrow
24 evening. And this is that--this is because every
25 time I get an email from the Fire Department that

there was a fire, even without a fatality, it really struck me. And that's what initiated me to do this fire safety, and now this.

So I am working with my colleagues, the borough president, the Brooklyn Borough President and the Controller, and the Speaker, and many of my colleagues, and the City Council and Congressional Districts and the State Assembly to make sure that we get this information out to the public. To make sure and also to ensure everyone has the smoke detectors--the smoke detectors that they need. We can--we cannot always leave a family--leave it to them to purchase a smoke detector because sometimes a family may not be able to afford it. But we need to take a proactive approach to makes sure that everyone is protected. And God forbid if a--if a fire strikes their homes, because fires don't discriminate if it's a vacant home ore someone resides there. So once again, I want to ask you if we could work together in making sure that our senior population is well protected. Thank you so much.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, Council Member Deutsch. I think, you know, we all share with

1 you the concern about fire safety. And I think
2 recently the FDNY has been sending around, you know,
3 to all Council Members. I've gotten a lot. You
4 know, every time there's a fire, we know about it.
5 But we've got to do everything we can to protect our
6 seniors especially in their senior centers.
7 Commissioner, I'm just going to ask you one last
8 question. On agency efficiency, the Mayor has stated
9 that he is requesting agencies to seek out budge
10 efficiency in such a way that the level of service
11 that the agency provides is not diminished. So has
12 DFTA applied such efficiencies to its budget for
13 Fiscal 2016, and if so, how?

15 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: I'd like to that,
16 you know, we're a lean and mean shop. So there's not
17 a lot of fat in the budget. All of the fat is
18 basically on my body. [laughs] So we actually did
19 institute a voiceover internet network, where we--and
20 we worked with the Department of Information and
21 Technology, DOITT, to realize some significant
22 savings of around a half a million dollars. Just by
23 weeding out old telephone lines that are no longer in
24 service. There's quite a few of them, and putting in
25 a VOIT system.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay. I just needed to get that on the record. I know that DFTA is lean and mean and tough. [laughs] But we want to get the-- You know, we want to get the paddings back.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes we do.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So we have to continue to advocate--

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: [interposing] What a budget that is. [sic]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And we have, you know, a whole list of questions in terms of a particular program that we'll be sending--sending to you, and I hope that you will answer those questions with more specifics. So that we know what's the total amount that you are requesting from OMB and from the Administration so that we can really help advocate for the increase in funding. Because going forward I think we are moving ahead to make sure that we take care of the agency and build it back and build it stronger. So, we're not going backwards. We're not accepting cuts. And it is not enough for the City Council putting in money every year. I mean the City Council we're willing to work with you, and put in funding for new programs, innovative programs. You

1 know, developing more NORCs around the city. But
2 basic core services, that's the Administration's
3 responsibility. That's the Mayor's responsibility.
4 So, we will continue to work with you to make sure
5 that he hears us loud and clear because he's almost
6 there, too. You know, so we have to make sure that
7 he's going to be part of the aging population.

9 COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And we want to make
11 sure that we get adequate funding from the City. So
12 with that, I thank you for coming today to testify,
13 and we have a lot of senior centers, advocates,
14 providers that are here today, and I want to thank
15 all of them for being here. And we are going to
16 start hearing their testimony. I'm going to have to
17 step out at noon for about 15 minutes because I have
18 to be at a rally for my plastic bag legislation. But
19 I will be right back, and Council Member Vallone will
20 take over as Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Now, we're in
22 trouble.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So thank you,
24 Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: And thank you, and I appreciate your advocacy and support, and I really--I am very hopeful that we'll come back for the next budget hearing with some specifics. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, we're looking forward to the Executive Budget, but we want to make sure it's in there before, right?

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, I am also going to be meeting with the Deputy Mayor to continue to push.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER CORRADO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We're going to call up the next panel. Bobbie Sackman from Live On New York with Andrea Vinay [sp?]; Loris Guevara, and also Tova Klein from Selfhelp.

[pause, background comments]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [off mic] I guess I'll step out now. I'll be back. Thanks.

[background comments, pause]

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Good morning our esteemed ladies.

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1 Hi.

2 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: If we could all
3 just introduce each one, and get started from left to
4 right.
5

6 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Oh, you want us--Okay,
7 you've got to introduce yourself. Say you're a
8 senior.

9 LORIS GUEVARA: I am starting?

10 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Just say your name.

11 LORIS GUEVARA: My name is Loris Guevara.
12 I am born in Sunny--

13 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [interposing] If we
14 could have some quiet in the Chambers. Our first
15 panel is talking.

16 LORIS GUEVARA: On the Sunnyside
17 Community of Queens.

18 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you.

19 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Bobbie Sackman, Director
20 of Public Policy, Live On New York.

21 ANDREA VINAY: [off mic] My name-- [on
22 mic] Okay, my name is Andrea Vinay. I'm with Live On
23 New York as a Senior Activator.

24 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Good morning

25 SERGEANT-A-ARMS: Keep it down, please.

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TOVA KLEIN: My name is Tova Klein. I'm
the Vice President for Senior Communities at
Selfhelp.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Good morning, Tova.

TOVA KLEIN: Okay. I'm good.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Go ahead Bobbie.
You can start.

BOBBIE SACKMAN: Okay, you have a packet
in front of you. I'm not going to read the whole
thing. You've already touched on a lot of the
issues, and I thank you. There were very good
questions today. So I just want to highlight a few
things. The Commissioner mentioned that \$6.8 million
is being put in New York Connects, which is state
funding. Also know as No Wrong Door. There are also
2,000 people on waiting lists for case management. I
think it's about 250 for home care, and we're at 100%
utilization in the Meals on Wheels system. So
there's a tipping point that's going to happen. So
imagine you come to be assessed, which is what New
York Connects is with No Wrong Door. And they say
fine. We just assessed you, and there is no door.
You're on a waiting list. It's only to increase
frustration obviously, and it's only going to show in

more glare--in a more glaring way that the city is not stepping up to the plate on serving these seniors. So, of course, our hope is that this No Wrong Door process was put to place one is that they'll talk to the community so we know what the process is. And two, that they'll take care of waiting lists because otherwise what's the sense of assessing people and telling them when they're 80 years old or older to go sit on a waiting list.

Secondly, we're disappointed that the Department for the Aging and the Commissioner is not asking for new money for innovative senior centers. While we agree that senior centers need to increase their baseline funding across the board I think that it's obvious. The innovative senior centers, the original proposal, which live on and the Council of Senior Center proposed was to touch certain communities. And one them were communities of immigrants that are underserved. And to date the majority of the innovative senior centers, while they're great programs, they're not serving predominantly in immigrant communities. They serve communities, but not predominantly immigrant. So we do have some space there to move ahead, and give good

funding and creativity to more innovative senior centers.

And let's see. What else did I want to add. I want to get back also to NYCHA, the NYCHA senior centers. So what I remain unclear about is the City Council put in a lot of money to the NYCHA Senior/Community Centers last year. And apparently there's \$6 million according to what the Commissioner said today. And I don't know--has there been an evaluation of these centers? Are they up to part to be a senior center? And we have a \$4 million request for NORC funding, a million and a half of that is new money and two and a half was put in last year, to target NYCHA developments. So would there be a way to look at what existing funding are in these NYCHA senior centers. Look at maybe there needs to be additional NORC funding. I think the worst thing would be in a starved system would be to lose this money to aging. And I could see that happening because we don't have a strong Administration on aging issues. [bell] And just finally, Live On New York has a very robust program to sign seniors up for SCRIE and SNAP. But we need a public awareness campaign like the Pre-K public awareness campaign

1 like the home-based homeless campaign. That's called
2 a public awareness campaign. We've never had that
3 for SCRIE in this city. And it's just as important
4 as those other programs. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Since Bobbie was
7 the first, did we put on the clock. We have over
8 seven panels for today. So we want to make sure
9 everybody gets a chance to speak. But in no way will
10 we cut you off of important topics. If there are any
11 questions, which you always are very good at getting
12 to us, we're going to have a formal response,
13 Margaret and I sent back to the Mayor for additional
14 funding. We'll add your concerns just like Ms.
15 Sackman brought up now. I think you brought up a
16 very good point about our immigrants, and I think
17 that's one of our largest growing demands. And a
18 whole host of issues that come along with language
19 services and cultural based foods and additional
20 programs that they bring. So thank you.

21 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Okay.

23 ANDREA VANAY: My name is Andrea Vinay,
24 and I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf
25 of Move On today. I am proud to be a New York Move

On activator. Move On New York has trained me and other older adults to advocate on behalf of community based aging services. We understand well the meaning of unmet needs and baselining funds. It is clear that while our numbers are growing rapidly, funding is way behind leaving waiting lists insufficient funding for existing programs and lack of funding for additional services needed. We appreciate City Council's historic support of senior services. The time to adequately fund aging services is long overdue, as you well know. Live On New York formed formerly Council for Senior Centers and Services--

[background comments]

ANDREA VANAY: In terms of the funding, number 1 is Per-Meal Reimbursement of \$3.3 million. Access to nutritious, affordable food is-- I'm sorry, nutritional--nutritiousness--affordable food is key to both preventing and treating hypertension, diabetes, heart conditions, and other illnesses of aging. Additional funding would bring the meal reimbursement rate closer to the goal of \$3.35 per meal to provide health means that are compliant with the City's own nutrition standards. Currently, reimbursement is \$2.45 per meal for kosher and non-

kosher congregate meals and non-kosher home delivered meals. And \$2.70 for kosher home delivered meals.

In order to provide a variety of meals to meet the needs of an increasingly immigrant and diverse older adult population, additional funding is necessary.

\$3.3 million would add 25 cents more per meal, plus additional funds for kosher home delivered meals.

2. Increase Meals on Wheels Capacity to \$1.8 Million. The current Home Delivered Meals program, HMDL is at 100% utilization. There have not been waiting this for Meals on Wheels in many years. Surely, City Council and the Administration to not want to allow waiting lists to start again.

According to the Department for the Aging in order to prevent waiting lists for Home Delivered Meals for frail homebound seniors, \$1.8 million is needed to increase citywide capacity by 5% or 230,000 meals annually.

3. Six Weekend Congregate Meal - \$500,000. Live On New York thanks City Council for bringing this important meal program back. Dozens of senior centers citywide have opted to utilize this additional funding to provide one takeaway meal from

the senior center. We would like the funding to be restored.

4. Caregiver Supports and Respite - \$3 million. In New York State family members taking care of elderly parents, spouses, partners and others provide \$32 billion worth of free care to the State, but they need help. Access to affordable elder care and caregiver supportive services are the workforce issues of the 21st Century, particularly for women. Studies report that women lose over \$600,000 in compensation over their career due to loss of salary, lack of job promotion, changing to part-time work, or leaving the workforce due to care giving responsibilities. [bell] And in addition to lower Social Security pension payments and out-of-pocket costs for care giving. \$3 million would provide services to the caregivers such as information about services, counseling and support groups, and respite care giving a break to work or do other things. Respite includes home care, adult daycare and facilities where their loved ones can stay overnight, if necessary. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Live On New York and the Senior Activators look forward to working with the City

Council to ensure that there is sufficient funding for older New Yorkers and their family caregivers. And I'm afraid I get a little emotional because I had to take care of my mother for four years at the end of her life. And I had an awful to learn, and I never regretted a minute of. But when I thought back over the weekend of my life was in 2002 as opposed to where it was after 2006, it's a massive difference. And it is just amazing. And I did receive and I was so grateful for the support of neighbors, and also my employer. But the realities are that there is a big difference in what my future will carry. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Your mother is smiling on you now.

ANDREA VANAY: I feel that very strongly.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: You know it's those personal experiences that probably of everyone in the room because as an elder attorney, these are the things and the stories that we hear everyday. So it's the actions we take today to prepare to make sure that those don't happen again in the future. You brought up some very good points. Caregivers really aren't in this budget, and I hope to fight for that and if not then for next year put a platform

1 together. Because the reality is there is a whole
2 new generation that's has taken care above and below
3 as well as their spouses. And there are really no
4 services unless it's Selfhelp or some other groups
5 that are doing it on their own. And the question I
6 wanted to ask all of you at the table because it came
7 up-- And thank you Commissioner for staying. It's
8 always nice to have you here to listen. It seemed
9 like there wasn't a big response on that six-day
10 questionnaire. And I'm just wondering if that maybe
11 just wasn't the outreach was good enough. But to me
12 when I go throughout the senior centers, and
13 especially in my district, I have yet to hear one
14 tell me they wouldn't like an additional meal for the
15 weekend. And it seems like less than 30% of the
16 senior centers said yes. Any thoughts on that?

18 ANDREA VANAY: I have a contribution. I
19 actually volunteered at a--it was Saint Luke in the
20 Fields in Greenwich Village at the peak of the AIDS
21 crisis. And it was a 2,000 calorie meal that we
22 prepared, and provided to people of the community to
23 bridge the gap between Friday and Monday where God's
24 Love we Deliver provided. So that people would not
25 have to go without. And if they were too sick for

the meal, we also prepared a very nutritious and enriched soup to come as close as we could to that 2,000 calories. And if it was the only meal that they could have, at least they would have that one meal on the weekend. And I--

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [interposing] Okay.

ANDREA VANAY: --also home delivered meals to those that were too sick to come in.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So you're supporting it, which is what I assumed.

ANDREA VANAY: [interposing] Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Right. Yes.

ANDREA VANAY: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I think we may have to go back to that. [laughs] I think those numbers are a little bit off. I would think that across the board everyone is asking me for that. Thank you for your testimony. Tova, sorry for stepping in, but you can start your three minutes. And thank God for--I was going to say Selfhelp, which in my district is the best. Thank you very much.

LORIS GUEVERA: Okay. Thank you for this opportunity to appear here at the City Hall. Also, we recognize the opportunities and for your help in

the past year during this time. Now, please the seniors need about \$33 million to better our service, and quite right. And advocate for it. We manage really for meals and to make sure no seniors on waiting list. We don't want to ignore them. [sic] Really, we need love, compassion, and peace in our lives. Our--through our Mayor de Blasio opportunities we are requesting your help one more time because the seniors we are a priority here around and close in New York City. Thank you for hearing me and God bless you.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: God bless you.

TOVA KLEIN: Hi, good morning. My name is Tova Klein and I'm the Assistant Vice President for Senior Communities at Selfhelp. I want to thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you. I feel also like I don't know who is the more outstanding advocate here. I'm sitting here with Bobbie and you and there's the Commissioner. I mean we're all ready preaching to the choir. So I'm very grateful to have--

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [interposing]

We're hoping the choir is listening. That's the point. [laughs]

TOVA KLEIN: Yes, yes. Last year, funding was added for case management to allow us to reduce the case loads to 65 and that's had a really profound effect on our ability to do service, to provide service. We're not able to call clients once a month. We're able to provide services that we couldn't provide before, more intensive case management. And that's been a really great thing. The problem is and the Commissioner knows this herself. She brought it up herself. There are over 2,000 people on the waiting list right now to get case management services. An individual will call and say I need help, and basically be put on the waiting list and told you've got to wait. And in our project pilot office alone, we've got over 250 people on the waiting list, which is a tremendous strain on the staff and on the clients. And so, we applaud the commissioner for stating that this is a high priority and we--we certainly back that.

Speaking of new staff, the other piece that I just wanted to raise is our budgets are so tight that when we do hire new staff, for the most part we're not able to hire MSWs. Our staff are BA level social workers. And the salaries that we're

1 able to pay them are embarrassing. And the reason
2 that we can only pay them that amount is because
3 we've got X budget. We have to serve X clients, and
4 that's what we've got. We urge everyone to really
5 think about giving us the funding to be able to hire
6 professional staff. The turnover is ridiculous, and
7 it's a tremendous strain on the staff itself. We
8 applaud the Commissioner for advocating for mental
9 health services, for the homebound isolated elders.
10 We would like to urge all of you to consider the
11 Virtual Senior Center, which is a way to bring
12 homebound elders very, very actively into the senior
13 centers services. We would like to suggest
14 integrating that into each of the centers so that
15 it's not outside of it, but more inclusive, and the
16 centers could get credit for the units. I wanted to
17 say thank you and we'll be talking to you some more.

19 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, last year
20 [bell] I argued for the credentials of who is
21 actually being hired. Because it's one thing to have
22 someone hired at basic right above minimum wage, and
23 someone bringing social workers and those with
24 clinical degrees. It makes quite a difference. It
25 must be very frustrating to train the new staff, and

1 then within probably three to six months lose them or
2 have to go through the process all over again I would
3 imagine.
4

5 TOVA KLEIN: It's very frustrating. It's
6 also very disruptive to the clients. Very disruptive
7 to the clients. There's--there's no relationship. I
8 mean we've been very, very fortunate, but the
9 turnover is huge.

10 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: What do you
11 attributed the increased demand I guess as the calls
12 in the case management is increasing over this year?
13 Even with the budget that was increased, you still
14 have an increased demand on case management.

15 TOVA KLEIN: Absolutely. I mean, you
16 know, we're all--we're all aging. There's more--
17 there's more elders out there.

18 BOBBIE SACKMAN: [interposing] Can I just
19 please add something? Thanks, Tova. I think last
20 year's money is targeted bringing down the waiting-
21 I'm sorry. The caseload size, and it went from 80 to
22 65, which is good news, but we all probably recognize
23 it should be even lower than 65. Truthfully, one
24 call a month to a homebound person is better than it
25 was, but it's not ideal. And so, the waiting list

1 grow and so you have a numbers game because there's
2 not enough money. You have high caseloads or
3 slightly lower waiting lists, or you have higher
4 waiting lists and slightly lower caseloads. There is
5 only so much you can do because the money is so
6 insufficient. In the packet that I gave you, I just
7 wanted to draw to your attention there's a list
8 broken out by City Council District by caseload size
9 and waiting list. Which actually DFTA gave us, and I
10 thank them for that. And so in essence, there is
11 just not enough funding. And just one final thing,
12 we support Live On New York. The Human Services
13 Council Initiative for COLA increases for sort of the
14 professional mid-level kind of work. Which is
15 exactly what Tova is talking about. In all our
16 budget requests that concerns--includes senior
17 centers, it's at a compensation level of--for MSW.
18 We need a trained workforce and we need people that
19 will stay.

21 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, we join you
22 in that fight, and we will continue to do that. So
23 thank you for your testimony, and we will continue
24 on. Thank you, ladies. So the next panel is Pu Ling
25 Ming from Grand Street. Valentine Coto from 106th

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street, Ming Ling Si from Mott Street, Helen is her first name? Connie Sue Poking or Poking from the North Forest Hills Co-op. So there should be one, two, three or four. Pu Ling Ming, Valentine Coto, Ming Ling, and Bonnie Sue Poking.

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you guys for making it today. You have three minutes so--

SERGEANT-A-ARMS: [interposing] Would you keep it down, please?

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I recognize you. It's good to see you again. So you can be the first one to start.

PO-LING NG: [off mic] Seeing you is always good.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [laughs] That's a good thing.

PO-LING NG: [off mic] Good morning. Thank you and--

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Is your microphone on there? Is the red light on? Push the red button right in front of you there.

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PO-LING NG: Good morning and Chairman Vallone, you are very good. I love you, but you always to say yes to okay us money. [laughs]

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [interposing] It's like my children.

PO-LING NG: So that's why I see you every year, and our lovely Commissioner of the Department for the Aging. Today, our group be here very early. That's means Open Door seem they are very clear of their program. Open Door, open our doors since the 1972. This year is our 43rd Anniversary. We did we did a wonderful job, wonderful job, you know, for the seniors population. First of all, thank you City Council. Thank you our Department for the Aging strongly supporting Open Door. So we are an are the very successful senior center in the whole wide world not only in the city. But the one thing I really thank you, you know is our lovely Chairperson and our members are really concerned about the seniors. How to provide the great quality and quality services for our seniors. You were earlier about the senior health and talking about Meals on Wheels. Talking about the complicating bill. I will tell you true Open Door try to get any funding that is

governmental. Why? Well, we don't worry about how helpful our job. Our goal is really to provide quick services for our seniors. But the one thing that we know only for the seeking Meals on Wheels. I guess the way you interrupt them is Meals on Hills because the government don't give us enough money. So we should use our hill to deliver meals and like in two hours. So that's why, you know, and all our clients love us. The one thing we service, you know, Meals on Wheels seven meals a day. Everything but unfortunately they make us to deliver the frozen food. The seniors doesn't like the frozen food, but what could we do? Our center is only open five days a week. So that's why no choice. The weekend we should deliver, you know, and the frozen food. And also I thank you, you know, and they're talking about six weekend congregate meals. But the one thing is our center is only open five days a week. But right now I have a good idea. Because the seniors always complain. No place to go during the weekend. They need to socialize. They need hot food. Could you give us more money, and thank our seniors to go to the restaurant and let them socialize and enjoy their hot tea and dim sum and the different kinds of mango

1 [sic]. I think is very, very, very good for them.
2
3 So I thank you, but not also not only talking about
4 Meals on Wheels and Congregate meals. But I know
5 everyone hear of us. Right now I really want to talk
6 about the Capital Budget. Thank you, you know, the
7 Department for the Aging for providing us a very
8 great facility. Unfortunately, our windows are all
9 broken. Especially during the wintertime. Wow, we
10 have very good air conditioning. Let everyone get
11 sick. So that's why I really like give us the
12 capital budget and fix the windows. Let our staff
13 and the members really enjoy their life.

14 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you, my dear

15 PO-LING NG: Not only that.

16 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: The good--the good
17 news is the Commissioner definitely heard you.

18 [laughs]

19 PO-LING NG: Yeah, not only that--

20 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I'm going to have
21 to ask you to kind of wrap it up a little people.

22 PO-LING NG: Yeah, because I have a lot
23 of seniors over there a long time.

24 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [interposing] I
25 know they're all in their hats and I see them, and

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1 they've been here since early this morning. So thank
2 you guys for being here. Open Door is really worth
3 the
4

5 PO-LING NG: Also--also, you know,
6 support us 11:30 to 1:00. You see all our seniors so
7 really strong support. They come here from 9:00
8 something. They still are here. They sit there.
9 Why they come over here? On behalf of the Open Door
10 members, and us our lovely Chairperson Vallone.
11 Promise to give us more money. Let us run the center
12 more successful. If you not promise us, we don't
13 leave.

14 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [laughs] Well, you
15 are going to--we are with you, my dear. That was
16 quite--quite informing and I thank you for that, and
17 your passion is why we're all here. So thank you.
18 Dim sum at the Open Door for everyone I think.

19 HELEN MENG SI: [laughs] Okay. I just
20 want to say I echo Po-Ling, you know, she good. We
21 admire her in the community, and really-- You know,
22 what she is saying is really true, and all the
23 seniors, you know, really that live in the community
24 there are programs and leadership. And so, I wanted
25 to say today my name is Helen Meng-Si. I'm from the

Chinatown Neighborhood NORC Program and thank you Councilman Vallone and the Aging Chair Committee. You know you let me testify on behalf on New York City's NORC and Nurse program. And there are three areas they would like to focus on today. Funding of current NYC Neighborhood NORC program and the expansion of the new Department [sic] Program. The importance of helping NORC and Nurse allocated funds that originated from the City Council they slide into the Department for the Aging's NORC Supportive Service Program. And the most important allocation of ethical funds to supporting rising service in NORCs. And I know there are times where you are short. [sic] Actually, our program, you know, based on their funding and the New York State Office for Aging. However, only since 2006 they give us \$143,000 and periodically they cut down our budget. You know, each year we receive \$20,000 less than the usual fund. And then, you know, last year they talk about, you know, the nursing. They require us to have a half-time nurse, which is close to \$80,000. So you can do the calculation. You know, we don't have much budget to do all this operation. However, our program serves over 1,000 seniors in our area.

1 And this is limited budget. We revise, you know, our
2 schedule. And also, you know, the manpower. And
3 especially we want to create the social services and
4 nursing together. This is a successful to our
5 program, but we felt that one day we cannot do it.
6

7 And then also the other thing is that
8 thank you that the City Council give us the money
9 last year for the Fiscal Year 2014-2015. We can
10 have--otherwise we will have 2000--100--a 200,000
11 deficit. And then that's very important that, you
12 know, the money really is make us survive, and
13 benefit the whole community. And then, our community
14 is low-income and all the immigrants, you know. And
15 also after all the program pallets, you know, the
16 other programs, then we can, you know, make a
17 committee to be a better, you know, aging in place.
18 And then, NNORC a member a member of good stability,
19 and then what we find is a separate team over the
20 wider borough. [sic] In addition, we urge the City
21 Council to post baseline of the Neighborhood NORC
22 Program, expansion of NORC and In NORC and the most
23 important is the nursing service provided in NNORCs.
24 Thank you very much.
25

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CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you. Go
ahead.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Just turn that mic
on.

BARBARA SUPACORNI: My name is Barbara
Supacorni [sic] and I am a client of Forest Hills
North for the last past 11 years. I am virtually
housebound and due to the services of NORC it has
enabled me to remain in my home. One of the services
that NORC offers is that they have a nurse once a
week. It used to be twice a week, but recently has
been cut in half. With the nurse available, I am
able not to have to make as many trips to my primary
doctor. The nurse will monitor my blood pressure and
I will notify my doctor. In addition, I have other
medical conditions, and the nurse has been extremely
helpful. When we had a nurse twice a week, not only
could I be monitored twice a week, but the nurse was
able to do multi-session workshops. For example, I
participated in a workshop for heart care and for
diabetes. These sessions were not only educational,
but it showed us how to maintain our health.

NORC has many programs. For example, approximately once a month there's a program on brain health, which includes exercises. Once a week there's balance class to learn how to maintain your balance and fall prevention. There is just not enough time to list all the classes offered. Because I am homebound, getting fresh food is difficult.

NORC has a program that has teenagers who would call everyday. They would get my medicines and pick up such items as fresh fruit and dairy. Sadly, this has been defunded. NORC also has a housekeeper who helps us. She will clean the house, do laundry and the service is free unless you wish to make a donation.

Finally, NORC is a long friendly organization who knows their clients. One day I was unable to reach a neighbor all day. The next morning I notified NORC. Since NORC knew this person, they immediately understood that there was something wrong. If I had called the police, they would have knocked on the door, received no answer and left. So I went to NORC and they responded. After verifying she was not in the hospital, NORC went to management, they broke down the door and found her semi-conscious on the floor. NORC is a vital support to the seniors

1 in my development. Their services are invaluable to
2 seniors, and helps keep them safe, healthy and
3 active. It has had a profound affect upon my life,
4 and it is important that NORC be continued and
5 funded.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Your stories are
8 exactly why Margaret and I fight so hard with the
9 rest of the Council. So thank you for sharing. Sir,
10 did you want to speak?

11 VALENTINE COTO: Hi. My name is
12 Valentine Coto. I belong to the Center Oak, Red Oak,
13 135 West 106th Street. I heard before that any center
14 that has the space available we have. We have the
15 space available for a gym. Also, we need dinging
16 tables, the ones that fold and with wheels on.
17 Because the ones that they have now they are very old
18 and the people there the staff are working very hard
19 to try to get them to work. But they haven't had
20 time doing so. This is--the staff of this place is
21 very nice people. They just happen to--they help you
22 on anywhere they can. They are very polite. The
23 food is great. The area is very nice, and I was
24 going to be very brief about this. I don't know how
25 much to say, but they really need a space--they have

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plenty of room for a gym and also the dining tables
that's the most. That is all I have to say.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, the
Commissioner is nodding her head behind you so I
think you're going to get some dining room tables for
that. And I see her smiling, so you're a very good
advocate. Good.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Thank you
for coming and I urge you, sir, to talk to your local
Council Member. Do you know who your Council Member
is?

VALENTINE COTO: [off mic] No, ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Huh?

VALENTINE COTO: [off mic] No, ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, we had better
help you check it out. We have your address. We had
better look it up for you right away, because your
local Councilperson can also help you get those
dining room chairs--dining room tables, and also for
other capital projects. As the Commissioner said
earlier, a lot of the capital dollars are
discretionary, which means that it came from the City
Council.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Right.

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CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But I hope that going forward that DFTA can also, you know, do a survey of what the capital needs are for each center, and really incorporate that as part of their budget. And I know I miss Po-Ling Ng's testimony.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Oh, yeah, she testified. It's okay. It's okay.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: She was going to testify from Open Door. Thank you for being here, but she always talks to me every time I see her--

PO-LING NG: [interposing] Oh, yeah, every time.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: --in Chinatown. But I heard that you did not mention the issue about staff support.

PO-LING NG: Yes, yes.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Right, so I think that's important.

PO-LING NG: Because, Vallone-- I want to speak. Vallone said that the time out. [laughs]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But I think that's one point that pulling ways that's important for our senior centers, Commissioner, while you're still here. Is that we want to make sure that keep the

1 staff that we have in these centers. So the fact
2 that a lot of them haven't gotten any kind of pay
3 increase or don't have, you know, good health
4 benefits or pension, that is something that the
5 Administration and City Council really need to
6 address. Because we want to make sure that we keep
7 the workers that we have who are so dedicated to help
8 our seniors and to take care of our seniors. And we
9 cannot take care of them. So I think going forward
10 we really need to know how to, you know, work on this
11 issue to make sure that we adequately compensate the
12 workers in our senior centers. So thank you all for-
13 -for coming today. And hopefully by the Executive
14 Budget we will have better news for you. All right,
15 thank you.

17 FEMALE SPEAKER: [off mic]

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. [laughter]

19 Thank you. So we are going to call up the next
20 panel. Mallory Nugent from the Federation of
21 Protestant and Welfare Agencies; Leo Asen from AARP;
22 Laura Thompson from SAGE; and Kevin Douglas from the
23 United Neighborhood Houses.

24 [background comments]
25

SERGEANT-A-ARMS: May we have it quiet,
please? Quiet down, please.

[background comments, pause]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, you can begin.

LEO ASEN: I'll turn this off again.

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Chin, Councilman Vallone
and Commissioner and members of the Aging Committee.
My name is Leo Asen, and I'm the State President of
AARP. On behalf of our State Director Beth Finkel
and nearly 750,000 members age 50 and older in New
York City--

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [interposing] Excuse
me. Can you put the mic closer?

LEO ASEN: Oh, sorry.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, so there we go.

LEO ASEN: Okay. I want to thank you for
the opportunity to talk about some important topics
related to caregiving

SERGEANT-A-ARMS: [interposing] All
quiet, please. Quiet, please. Thank you.

LEO ASEN: Family caregivers provide an
invaluable resource in caring for their loved ones at
home. It's a big job and once in a while they need a
break. That's why respite care programs such as

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Social Adult Day are so important because they provide a social environment for older adults with Alzheimer's, Dementia or physical disabilities. During 2013, AARP along with Live On New York and New York State Caregiving and Respite Coalition and others convened 14 listening sessions across New York State and learned that caregivers are in desperate need of respite services. In FY15, the City Council allocated \$600,000 for Adult Day Services. This allocation was not baselined. AARP supports the full request for \$2.3 million in the FY16 Budget. And finally, family caregivers are a vital part of the caregiving continuum. Statewide--statewide 4.1 million family caregivers provide over \$32 billion of unpaid care to their loved ones. As the Baby Boom generation ages, more of us will need care. A recent AARP report found that in New York in 2010, there were 6.6 potential caregivers age 45 to 64 for every person in the high-risk years of 80 plus. In 2030, there will be just 4.8. The typical caregiver in New York is 64-year-old woman who has either a high school or some college education and spends more than 40 hours providing care to her mother. Businesses also lose as much as \$33.6 billion annual in worker

productivity because of employees' caregiving obligations.

In 2014, AARP surveyed New York City voters over the age of 50. Nearly half of working voters are caregivers or have been a caregiver in the past five years. Among those working caregivers, two-thirds report a good deal to overwhelming levels of strain from caregiving responsibilities. AARP believes it is important to establish city funding to support caregivers. Providing supportive services is essential to the wellbeing of the caregiver and the person for whom the care is provided. Supports might include respite care, home care, or a temporary replacement to name three, to allow caregivers to take care of themselves. And AARP supports a request of \$3 million in the FY16 Budget for caregiver supports [bell] and services. Chairwoman Chin and members of the Aging Committee, thank you for the opportunity to highlight a few of these critical needs.

KEVIN DOUGLAS: Good morning. My name is Kevin Douglas. I am Co-Director of Policy and Advocacy for United Neighborhood Houses of New York. We are an association of settlement houses and

community centers across the city. Including several of which you've heard from today, Grand Street Settlement, Queens Community House and Henry Street Settlement. These 30 agencies serve half a million New Yorkers a year in comprehensive neighborhood based services from Early Childhood Education all the way through senior centers and other supports. Among this continuum of services those older adults are among the most popular and important in the network. Every year our agency services 71,000 older adults in New York City providing meals. About three million every year to older adults, about a million home delivered meals. And we employ a lot of folks that work in the sector. We have 5,700 home care aids that support this population. So this is the--you know, the aging issues that we're looking at are very important to us. And we're going to really essentially support a few of the issues that have been raised today as well as focus on some of the bigger sector wide issues we think really underscore the conversation for aging as it sits in the human services continuum.

So two of the areas we really just wanted to focus on are case management and NORCs. In the

1 preliminary budget the is \$2.6 million, and we
2 appreciate the Council's work to get that funding
3 increased last year, and we would ask for an
4 additional \$400,000 this year. You heard earlier
5 today that there are almost 2,000 seniors on wait
6 lists for these services around the city. And we
7 really would encourage the Council to work with the
8 Administration to increase the amount of funding to
9 bring it down to this wait lists. For NORCs, this is
10 a really integral part of the work that our members
11 and others throughout the city do. Really taking a
12 comprehensive neighborhood based approach to serving
13 older adults that are concentrated in geographic
14 clusters. We know that there is money in the budget
15 right now, \$2.5 million and we would really like to
16 see the number of NORCs in the city increased. We're
17 asking for an additional \$1.5 million to focus on
18 expanding NORC services in the New York City Housing
19 Authority's domain.
20

21 So those are two of our main asks in the
22 aging area, and I want to take the last minute to
23 really talk about some of the broader sector wide
24 issues we think are important. You heard a
25 discussion earlier today about the inability of

1 providers to really hire the most qualified staff and
2 must use others to serve their constituents. And
3 really the reason is because the City, State and
4 other contracts don't adequately reimburse them to be
5 able to do that. So in partnership with many of the
6 other advocates you hear from today, we are really
7 encouraging the Council to look at implementing 10%
8 COLA, a Cost of Living Adjustment over the next two
9 fiscal years. To allow older adult providers as well
10 as others to really increase the salaries that they
11 are able to provide to cover other increased costs,
12 rent, healthcare, et cetera. So they can really
13 provide quality services without having to deal with
14 the massive turnover that the sector currently has
15 because the rates are so low. And that 10% we
16 encourage you to do 5% this fiscal year and 5% the
17 next fiscal year.

18
19 Before COLAs could really be effective,
20 though, we need to make sure that the wage floor is
21 established at a level that actually makes sense.
22 Because if we just do COLAs on top of insufficient
23 contracts that doesn't really get us anywhere. So in
24 terms of wages we're recommending that the City
25 create a wage floor of at \$15 an hour for the lowest

1 paid in the sector who are charged with caring for
2 older adults. And we want to make sure that we're
3 able to attract and maintain the most qualified
4 people to do that. And if we don't have the wages to
5 do so, then the older adults in their care are going
6 to be the most that really suffer. So in addition to
7 the really specific again ask for NORCs in case
8 management, we really would encourage the Council to
9 look at COLAs and wage floors for the lowest paid
10 workers in the sectors to make sure we're doing a
11 good job. Thank you.

13 MALLORY NUGENT: Hello. Thank you to the
14 Chairs and the Council for taking the time today to
15 hear our testimony on these important issues. My
16 name is Mallory Nugent, and I'm the Policy Analyst at
17 the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies. FPWA is
18 an anti-poverty organization with a membership
19 network of nearly 200 human service faith based
20 agencies many of whom serve New York seniors. We
21 know that by 2030, New York City's over 60 population
22 will increase by approximately 47%. We feel strongly
23 that now is the time to strengthen the systemic
24 infrastructure to meet the needs of this population
25 that brings so much to this city. We support our

1 fellow advocates in their desire to strengthen
2 current senior serving programs through funding
3 restoration and enhancements. To programs like
4 Social Adult Day Services, NORCs, Meals on Wheels and
5 case management. FPWA also strongly supports
6 innovative investments to build the capacity of the
7 current case management system to meet the growing
8 number of seniors with intensive needs.
9

10 FPWA would like to see an LMSW added to
11 each case management agency, with a recommended
12 caseload cap of 25 seniors. The social worker would
13 take on high-need time intensive cases such as
14 seniors with impending eviction, unsafe living
15 situations, or cognitive decline without formal
16 supports such as families and friends. By creating a
17 new nuanced tier to the current system, case
18 management agencies will be better able to assist
19 these seniors aging in place, which is both cost-
20 effective and provides dignity to those seniors.
21 This addition would better meet the intensive needs
22 of seniors while also freeing up the time for general
23 case managers to assist seniors with lower needs like
24 connections to Meals on Wheels and other services.
25 So we hope that the Council will continue to be such

strong advocates for investment in this important sector, and we hope that we can provide a resource and innovative ideas to make the sector stronger. Thank you.

REVEREND THOMPSON: Hello, Chairperson Chin and members of the New York City Council Committee on Aging. My name is Reverend Nora Ann Thompson, and so you know immediately that I can't talk as fast as them. [laughter] I'm here on behalf of SAGE, Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders. I'd like to thank you for holding this budget hearing on behalf of my self, and the LGBT Older Adults in New York City whom I represent today. SAGE is the country's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender older individuals and has provided comprehensive social service and community building programs for LGBT older adults in New York City for more than 30 years.

In June of 2014, the LGBT Caucus of the New York City Council generously provided SAGE with funding to do what we had dreamed of since our inception, to create LGBT senior centers in all of the boroughs of New York City. Allowing the older

adults like myself to have access to safe, affirming programs and meals in our own communities. LGBT older adults live in every neighborhood of New York City, and the City Council and the Department of Aging has been partners with us helping to envision and support--and innovating programming that will allow LGBT older adults to age in their own communities. We know it says that LGBT older adults are more likely to live alone and to live without the caregiving support that adult children and other family members so often provide. The senior centers that have opened in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem and on State Island provide vital services such as access to LGBTQ healthcare, case management support, daily meals and legal and financial resources.

With the expansion of SAGE's sites into new communities, SAGE is for the first time able to serve participants right where they live personifying the idea of aging place. My center, SAGE Harlem, primarily sees underserved LGBT elders of color from Central Harlem, West Harlem, and East Harlem. SAGE believes that elders of color living in Harlem, Brooklyn and the Bronx deserve culturally and linguistically competent services in their home

neighborhood. Our programs are designed around our needs, and the needs of the community [bell] focusing on issues such as financial literacy and security and health disparity that are prevalent in our community. Case managers across all of SAGE centers work with older adults one-on-one with their housing and financial concerns of security access to SCRIE, the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption, Medicaid, Medicare, homecare services, veterans benefits, SNAP, and health bucks at Farmer's Market to improve nutrition and employment programs such as SCSEP.

Staff accompanies clients to Housing Court; provide referrals to housing programs, and secure legal services and financial aid with the help of community partners. SAGE has always recognized the importance of partnership and we're grateful to the support we receive from our community partners. Our Brooklyn Center the SAGE Griat [sp?] Center is collaboration from SAGE and Griat Circle who have worked for decades to support LGBT elders of color as well as the Staten Island Pride Center. Who are our wonderful partner on Staten Island providing LGBT older adults with the welcoming and vibrant space in which to gather. We hope that the Committee on Aging

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and all members of the City Council will continue to support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender older individuals across New York City and prioritize these funding areas in the next budget. On behalf of the LGBT older adults who rely on SAGE's senior centers and myself, your support is greatly appreciated. Thank you for this opportunity.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, Ms. Thompson. And thank you--

CHRISTOPHER JONES: Christopher Jones. I'm the Site Manager for the Harlem Center.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, thank your for being here and thank you all for coming to testify, and thank you for your suggestion especially talking about COLA and increase for our workers and the baseline in terms of wages. That is something that we'll be working on, too. So thank you very much for coming today.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you, guys.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, our next panel. Eric Munson Can Met Council on Jewish Poverty; Molly Krakowski from JASA; Deborah Pollock, Community for Healthy Food; and Rachel Sherrow, City Meals on Wheels.

[background comments, pause]

RACHEL SHERROW: Hi. I'm Rachel Sherrow, Associate Executive Director for City Meals on Wheels. I want to thank both of you for having us here, and for taking the time to hear all of us. I'm not going to go through my whole spiel I know that you know very well that we have a very--

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [interposing] We like your spiel, Rachel.

RACHEL SHERROW: Well, I appreciate that, but I don't want to keep everyone else waiting. We have a very good public-private partnership with the Department for the Aging. They deliver the meals Monday through Friday. We step in weekends, holiday and emergencies. What we want to make very clear is our ask this year along with DFTA we know from all the stats, everybody has repeated them over and over, our aging population is growing, growing, growing. The need is growing. Meals on Wheels is at capacity. We all want to increase the rolls by nearly a thousand new clients. DFTA has asked for \$1.8 million in the Executive Budget. Therefore, City Meals needs to make sure that we can pay for those clients to get weekend, holiday and emergency meals.

We are respectfully asking Council for a million dollars to cover that request.

We're also asking for \$500,000 to continue a program that was also not discussed at all. We have a collaboration with Live On New York where we fund a social worker to go into homebound client's homes who are wait listed for case management-- As we've all heard it's about 2,000 people. There are 2,000 people on a wait list for casa management. They are currently getting meals, but they are not--they have not been assessed for benefits. Our one social worker has so far reached out to over 700 meal recipients. Been in over 250 homes, and as of the end of February 103 of those people actually have the SNAP benefits in hand. The average monthly benefit is \$107, which is extremely important to these meal recipients who are most at need for malnutrition. We call food and security. It's really hunger.

So part of that money is to continue to fund that social worker. Those are the clients that cannot go to one-stops, single-stops. They cannot go to their local senior center or even their NORCs. We also want to be able to increase our mobile food

1 pantry to make sure that those clients are getting
2 supplemental food. Again, our recipients cannot wait
3 on pantry lines. They cannot schlep the food home.
4 We need to make sure that they have food on hand in
5 addition to the one meal that they get a day. So
6 I'll end there and I-- Just to add, we also
7 absolutely, extremely support the case management
8 ask. Again, it's playing with number. We can lower
9 the caseloads, but it will just increase the wait
10 list. So we want to make sure that we're putting in
11 the money for the infrastructure there.

13 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: Hi, Molly Krakowski
14 from JASA. Nice to see you. I will also amend my
15 testimony. I'm going to jump to a handful of the
16 things we're looking for this year. And I was very
17 pleased to hear that the Commissioner mentioned that
18 they're looking add \$3 million for case management.
19 That's one of the areas that we are also looking to
20 increase. You said \$3.3 million, but really it's
21 been contested that we're able to lower the number of
22 cases per social worker. But there is still just
23 such a need, and the number of people that we could
24 reach if, in fact, we had that additional funding
25 would be significant. The senior centers as Council

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1 Member Vallone mentioned--the senior centers are
2 providing a tremendous amount beyond obviously the
3 meal, all those additional programs and services. We
4 have 21 senior centers in the Metropolitan area in
5 addition to some senior centers out in Long Island.
6 But most of the programming that goes on in the
7 senior centers is not funded.

8
9 And so, there's a constant challenge to
10 actually be able to provide all the services that we
11 want. To provide in order to continuously attract
12 and maintain and serve all of those individuals who
13 come in the best possible way. We're looking for the
14 Council obviously to restore the \$800,000 for the
15 rent that goes for subsidizing some of the rents that
16 was cut in this year's budget by the Mayor. And,
17 although that doesn't go towards a lot of our senior
18 centers, it's significant across the board in terms
19 of providing some of the assistance of rent, which
20 will otherwise just take away from programming that
21 the senior centers have to provide. We're on board
22 on with Live On New York's idea of putting additional
23 social workers into senior centers and into senior
24 housing. What currently goes on and we have a number
25 of housing sites, we have people who are doing

programming on the sites, but they're not social workers. And so, it really doesn't replace one with the other.

Any social work, any staff assistance at any of the senior centers would be welcome. Certainly, a social worker would be fantastic. We are very appreciative for the funding that was added for culturally appropriate meals in last year's budget. It really did a lot to help us with the kosher meals that we deliver in home delivered meals. But even with that assistance, this year we're looking at \$300,000 deficit just for proving the culturally appropriate meals. So any revisiting of how we go about doing reimbursement rates for culturally appropriate meals would be welcome. NORCs again it was mentioned that I think a Chinatown NORC, a Neighborhood NORC that funding for nursing services is something that's a continuous struggle. I think you all know and we had the hearing recently about NORCs that there is the match between the community or the management and the providers. There's an unfunded mandate to provide nursing services. And so, there's a constant problem that arises when the

nursing component isn't able to be provided. And how do we make up for it without funding?

The last two things that I want to just mention, affordable senior housing, which is obviously on the Mayor's agenda as affordable housing. Affordable senior housing is something that continuously is not on the radar, and we have, you know, a 15-year wait list in our Senior Section 202 Housing. There's a constant flow of phone calls to our help line, and from council members asking us if there isn't anything we could do to find housing for older adults. There is nothing that we could do currently. So we really want to see more senior affordable housing, and certainly we want it as part of a discussion. But we also want to make sure and there's been a lot of talk about the right to counsel and eviction proceedings. And so Intro 214 is something that we're very supportive of. We want to see people at least represented in court.

Finally, I'll just skip to one last piece. Elder abuse we always want more funding for and mental health. We obviously support anything that can be done in terms of geriatric mental health initiative whether or not it's a staff person in each

1 senior center I'm not sure. But we would even say
2 that that's necessary as much as ensuring that there
3 is more funding for geriatric mental health services,
4 and especially in-home services, which is very hard
5 to come by.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, Rachel, let
8 me just quickly interject what you just outlined is
9 the importance of the things like rent and
10 electricity and insurance and unfunded mandates.
11 They have to get paid from somewhere and that's what
12 we, Margaret and I and the rest of the Council have
13 been arguing that those should be baselined. They
14 should be included because otherwise the program gets
15 cut, and then it's the seniors who are hurt. So
16 thank you for that.

17 DEBORAH POLLOCK: Thank you. Good
18 morning Chair Chin and Aging Committee Members.
19 Thank you for considering this testimony on behalf of
20 a program, a new program called Communities for
21 Healthy Foods. We are for community based
22 organization, Cypress Hills in East New York, New
23 Settlement in the Bronx, Northeast Brooklyn in
24 Brooklyn, and I'm from West Harlem Group Assistance
25 in New York. My name is Deborah Pollock, and the

1 Director of West Harlem Group Assistance known as
2 WHGA located in the Bronx. We started Communities
3 for Healthy foods about three years ago with seed
4 funding and our partner in this is LISC. It's a
5 place based initiative that integrates access to
6 healthy and affordable food into every aspect of our
7 community development work. What's interesting about
8 this is that we took a vacant commercial storefront
9 of one of our properties and we made it into a
10 community hub. The community hub house a food pantry
11 for all people, but we've also established a day for
12 seniors.
13

14 We run a mental health program, and two
15 shelters, but seniors can't get around like everyone
16 else. They can't their way through crowds. They
17 can't wait in lines. So we've established the one
18 day for a choice food pantry for our seniors.
19 Interestingly enough, too, it's also very important
20 to note that food and security is not answered with
21 just giving somebody a meal. So the hub answers all
22 the other needs. Why are people insecure? So
23 together with our partners from the food bank we work
24 on the Tens Program and have wraparound services,
25 which include mental health services. Questions like

1 is there a domestic violence issue in the house? Is
2 there elder abuse in the house? What else is going
3 on in the household that has led the person to need
4 the food pantry. So it's access to--it's access food
5 with our partner in the CSA. It's education. It's
6 awareness. And again, most importantly, it's access
7 to wraparound services that are getting cut as we all
8 heard. I don't have to dovetail on that. Getting
9 cut throughout the City of New York.

11 We've asked for \$760,000 which will go to
12 all four groups. Our CVF partner in Brooklyn is part
13 of the Aging Improvement District Consortium in
14 Bedford-Stuyvesant, and their health food work is
15 incorporated into their neighborhood. We are
16 building on existing community resources that we
17 don't have to represent. We create the wheel. We
18 are a ready trusted resources in our communities. We
19 break down barriers and create easy access. We
20 started with 50 people a week in our choice food
21 pantry, and I don't have to tell you how quickly that
22 number jumped. We are the only food pantry besides
23 the food bank in that area of West Harlem. West and
24 Central Harlem does not have a great deal of wealth
25 in finding healthy foods. We don't have food stands

on every corner. So it's our goal to grow our Communities for Healthy Food into a place where people can come to not only learn about how to get healthy food. But to come and have that discussion about food and security, food justice, and how do we grow as a community together to solve some of the problems that are facing [bell] all of us.

ERIC MUNSON: Good afternoon, Council Members Chin, Vallone, and Cornegy. Thanks for inviting me to testify today. I'm Eric Munson. I'm the Chief of Staff at Met Council on Jewish Poverty. First, I'd just like to thank you for the past support. In prior years, you funded our ACES Program, ACES to Crisis Emergency Services and also Project Metro Pair, which are two Council Initiatives. So thank you very much for that support. We're asking for you to sustain that funding into Fiscal 16. Attached to my testimony are service numbers from the prior year, which I think are really terrific. And then I wanted to spend the rest of my time just talking about the program improvements we've done over the past year with that funding that you gave us. First and foremost, particularly with regards to this committee, the

first thing that we did was we focused more and more
on aging services at Met Council.

And the first way that we did that was we
hired a Geriatric Service Manager, someone named
Susan Biaritz, whose name you should get to know.
She's really terrific. So we basically decided that
Susan was going to be coordinating service across Met
Council at our housing sites and our food program,
and social services program and Metro Pair.

Everything across the agency she would be sort of the
ombudsperson for our senior issues. In addition to
that, we also hired more case workers, or sorry.

More handymen rather for Project Metro Pair. So we
have I think it was 2,600 repairs to senior's homes
last year alone under the Council initiative. So
thanks again for that support. We've also hired more
case workers to focus on Holocaust services because
there are 30,000 Holocaust survivors in New York City
who are at or below the poverty line. So we've been
working closely with them. And we also ask this year
as part of the a new initiative with the Coalition
of Survivor agencies to create an initiative for--
called the Survivor Initiative for providers of
Holocaust services.

1 We also completed construction on Council
2 Towers 7 in an affordable housing development in the
3 Bronx by our Co-op City. That brings our number to I
4 believe 1,077 units under management for seniors.
5 So it's really terrific. We also held these program
6 SCRIE Enrollathons, which are real exciting.
7 Basically, we went to all of our housing sites, and
8 informed all of our tenants about SCRIE. And sine we
9 have the leases it was really a seamless program. We
10 just provided them with the paperwork they needed to
11 fill out have the Department of Finance who is always
12 really cooperative. They came and helped us out as
13 well. We increased some of our donations of food.
14 We actually added protein to the kosher food network
15 thanks to a generous donor. So now we've been doing
16 chickens around the holidays, and we already started
17 last week, but within the coming couple of weeks
18 we're going to be doing 2.1 million pounds of food in
19 advance of Passover. So that's really terrific. We
20 also added two caseworkers to our Family Violence
21 Program, which is great as well. So thanks again for
22 the support, and I appreciate it. Thanks.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you very much
24 for your testimony, and for the great work that you
25

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all have done. And we look forward to seeing you in
this budget process here, and we also are joined by
Council Member Cornegy, and Council Member Arroyo.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: And before you go,
we just are also celebrating this year the 100th
Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. So maybe the
groups can work together April 26th in Times Square.
I know they could use your guidance and help in
putting all those resources and reaching out to
everyone because you've been such a leader in that.
So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, our next panel
is Rovella Levine from Queens Community House; Linda
Hoffman, New York Foundation for Senior Centers--
Senior Citizens; Janet Fisher, Henry Street
Settlement; and Bonnie Limongi [sp?] from Education
Alliance. You could correct my pronunciation when
you introduce yourself again. Thank you. [laughs]

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay. You may begin.
Whoever wants to go first.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: If you could just
push through here.

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DR. REBELLO LEVIN: Good morning. My name is Dr. Rebello Levin. I am a senior and a psychotherapist. I treat seniors and the disabled psychotherapeutically without referring patients for drugs. As we discovered just by looking around, we see that people are living considerably longer than was true when we were young. It is no longer an anomaly to read in an obituary page of people live well over 100. Consequently, there are more of the aging who need our services. Of course, that requires more financing, far right politicians notwithstanding. Many clients are unaware that contrary to their experience, people no longer just get old and die shortly thereafter. We need to help the aging to understand that they may very well live well over 65 and be unable to work. They are surprised to find that their bodies deteriorate slowly, but do not cease to exist. As a result, they have no plans for their old age.

That is one reason we need to have more case managers, and more money to pay them. As was mentioned, we have over 2,000 patients on the waiting list. This seems to me not at all unlikely a patient who needs a kidney transplant. The need is so great,

1 the donors so few that they patient may die before he
2 or she gets the kidney. Without a case manager the
3 patient may wander around without a map in the jungle
4 of providers. You more sophisticated people may take
5 for granted that there is help to be gotten and where
6 to go for it. But most people don't There were many
7 valuable things I didn't know until David Trier
8 [sp?], my case manager, told me about them. We
9 certainly don't want it to be on our consciences to
10 hear about an elder person freezing to death,
11 starving to death or dying alone of a heart attack or
12 stroke. Clients need to know that we will try to
13 offer them that most important of assistances, relief
14 from anxiety as their health deteriorates and they
15 become more helpless.

17 One way we could do that is to substitute
18 Meals on Wheels. Because of that agency the patient
19 can be assured she won't starve to death even if she
20 can't move. Probably second to this physical
21 deterioration is the loneliness problem. It appears
22 to be the time of life most vulnerable to that
23 feeling. And very probably the cause to the high
24 rate of suicide of the elderly. For that reason the
25 existence of senior centers are essential for aging.

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Seniors can make friends through their meetings and get various other kinds of help. But I understand they are woefully underfunded. So I'm asking you to fund these important agencies according to their need to help people who are living far beyond their expectations and don't want to commit suicide. Let us try to preserve our democracy and our civilization in the midst of fighting barbarism to whatever extent our abilities will allow us. Thank you.

BONNIE LIMONGI: Good morning. I'm Bonnie Limongi and I'm Council Member Chin, you said it right and I want to thank you all for having this hearing today, and allowing us the chance to speak. As said before, I represent Education Alliance, which is a multi-service agency located on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. We are pleased to be a partner with the City Government in operating neighborhood senior centers and an innovative senior center and an Natural Occurring Retirement Supportive Service Program. We have in our view benefitted many thousands of seniors and their families in the city in the most profound ways. We look forward to working together to ensure that these programs and services remain strong and relevant far into the

future with the Department for the Aging. In this spirit, we would like to bring to your attention an issue that we believe is not only relevant to us but all providers of services that are funned throughout the government--through government contracts, and that's the fact that senior centers and NORC contracts are mostly six-year contracts with no provisions for COLA, and health insurance increases. As you have already said, costs increase every year in all areas. As a consequence of this, the contract stays flat, and the amount of funds available to provide the services gets smaller. And yet the deliverables for the contracts remain the same. This places heavy burdens on sponsoring agencies, workers who provide valuable services to the most frail and needy. And the sponsor in our City receives no COLA increases over the lifetime of the contract. And with the continued rise in healthcare premiums, not-for-profit agencies are expected to supplement government contracts. This is something we just cannot do any more.

We urge the City Council to work with the Mayor and to invest more deeply in providing increases to multi-year contracts. Our older adults

are continuing--counting on us to continue services.

We are counting on you to ensure that we can continue to afford to provide these services. Thank you very much.

LINDA HOFFMAN: Good afternoon, Chairman Chin, Chairman Vallone and members of the Aging Committee. I will tell you, you are a very impressive group. I think that the elderly of the City of New York are very fortunate to have such a staunchly caring and such an enormously advocating group of elected officials that I've ever seen in a long time. I'm Linda Hoffman. Good afternoon. I'm President of New York Foundation for Senior Citizens. On behalf of our board of directors, I am requesting and would be deeply appreciative of an allocation from each of your discretionary funds plus your support of the provision of a minimum of \$100,000 from the Speakers Citywide Fund. To ensure the continuation of our Citywide Home Sharing and Respire Care Program in the City's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget.

Respite care, these are the two kinds of services that everybody keeps talking about are needed, and we are the only group that provides it. Respite care provide affordable short-term in-home

attendant care at a low cost of \$8.75 an hour for frail elderly who are attempting to manage at home with the help of others. Thereby, preventing the need for their premature institutionalization. So the caregivers and the frail elderly are able to receive help even if they're above the Medicaid level. The program's respite care service also provides free temporary in-home care for caregivers of the frail elder who experience a sudden inability to provide care on week days after 5:00 p.m. On weekends, holidays and in emergencies. Priority for this services is given to caregivers who are providing assistance to frail elderly with incomes of \$40,000 or less. During the past two decades we have provided over 6,782 frail elderly, and there are many more thousands of their caregivers with respite care services. Our free home caring service matches adult hosts who have extra space in their apartments or houses to share with responsible compatible adult guests in need of affordable housing. And we know all of us who care about seniors that the top priority of needs in city is affordable housing.

One of the match mates in a home sharing living arrangement must be 60 years of age or over.

During the past two decades, we have successfully matched 1,670 persons and 835 shared living arrangements. Our program's Home Sharing Program and Respite Care Services, the only ones of their type in New York City help seniors of all ethnic, racial, religious and income background with sexual orientations maintain their independence and alleviate the stress of financial hardship and prevent feelings of isolation and loneliness.

A recent foundation cost benefit analysis for the three-year period between October 1, 2010 and June 30, 2014 shows that our program saved New York City and State over \$29 million in Medicaid expenses by keeping people out of institutions. Over the years, the New York City Department for the Aging has stressed the vital need for and importance of both our Home Sharing and Respite Care services. And, therefore, on behalf of New York Foundation for Senior Citizens Board of Directors I urge to provide an allocation from your discretionary fund as well as the provision of a minimum \$100,000 from the Speaker's Citywide Fund toward this program. Thank you so very much.

JANET FISHER: Good afternoon [coughs].
My name is Janet Fisher and I'm the Chief
Administrator for Senior Services, Henry Street
Settlement. We have three DFTA Contracts: Meals on
Wheels, Our Good Companion Senior Center, and Vladeck
Care NORC. Historically, NORCs in New York City are
a collaboration of three partners, the CBOs, housing
partner and healthcare partners. In the case of
Vladeck Cares, our health partners, a visiting
service of New York, who has provided us with in-kind
nursing support. These nurses have been invaluable,
and an essential component of the NORC program.
These services not only provide assessments, in-home
assessments and service plans. Nurses work in
coordination with the case managers, coordinate
medication and so forth.

The services are particularly critical
for a multi-cultural low income, high-risk seniors
many of whom suffer from diabetes, hypertension or
obesity. Unfortunately, due to the change in the
healthcare marketplace, partners like V&S has been
forced to cut back in their own kind nursing hours at
NORCs throughout the city. [coughs] Many NORCs are
struggling to provide the required 21 hours per week

1 set by DFTA for which we are given no additional
2 funding. Recently, we reached out to our sister
3 NORCs, and we did a survey which is attached to this
4 testimony for you to explore. The one factor that's
5 holding back all the NORCs in meeting the nursing
6 needs is money. Based on an hourly rate of \$75 per
7 hour, we believe that by providing \$1 million in
8 additional support for nursing at the NORCs in the
9 New York City Fiscal 16 Budget, we will be able to
10 meet the nursing and health goals set by DFTA.

12 Equally important, without these
13 additional nursing hours, we will be short changing
14 our NORC seniors, especially the most vulnerable ones
15 who depend on us for a whole range of health
16 services. However, with additional nursing funds we
17 will be able to help seniors age in their home, age
18 with dignity, improve the quality of life and at less
19 costs than institutionalization. We respectfully
20 believe that these funds will allow the NORCs in New
21 York City to support in expanding the nursing. We
22 would also like to reinforce what a number of my
23 colleagues have said, the importance of a COLA.
24 Unfortunately, when a COLA is given by many agencies
25

1 like Henry Street, it comes out of the program bottom
2 line. Obviously, programming to sacrifice.

3
4 I'd like to make a couple of additional
5 points quickly. [bell] The Commissioner noted that
6 part of the model of senior centers is working on
7 volunteers. We come from a neighborhood and a
8 community that is very ethnically diverse, an
9 immigrant community where volunteerism has a totally
10 different definition than perhaps mainstream America.
11 And we feel that we really need to have funding for--
12 to span this gap and not depend on volunteerism,
13 which is not an appropriate way to run a professional
14 program especially with the demands made by DFTA.

15 The other thing is we've heard so much
16 talk about putting social workers in senior centers.
17 That's wonderful, and we have one at the expense that
18 Henry Street is incurring. I think we also need to
19 look at putting social workers back in Meals on
20 Wheels, which can take the burden off some of the
21 case management to deal with low risk situations,
22 turns meals on, do minimal and maintain some
23 benefits. And, of course, I must leave you with my
24 favorite subject and reinforce what everybody said
25 about mental health. The need for geriatric mental

health within the specified area of senior services is a must that's been neglected terribly. Thank you so much for allowing me to express these ideas.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, Janet.

Thank you all for the great work that you do, and a lot of the services that you've talked about. It's something that the Administration should have baselined. It should be part of the core program, and I think we hear you about the COLA. Because we want to be able to make sure that we have the workers that are really taking care of our seniors continue to be able to support their own family. So we will definitely look into that issue. Thank you again for being here today.

JANET FISHER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, we have two more panels. Howard Shih from Asian-American Federation along with--Let's see, Adelphine Petechiae.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, you can correct--you can identify yourself better. Betty Ann Leiberwitz [sp?] from--Betty Ann Lieberwitz; Mohammed Raji [sp?]. I think he submitted testimony for the record. Raymond Ramon Balito.

1 [background comment]

2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Huh.

3 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: No question.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay. And Rash Hadi
5 [sp?] from the Senior Center of Sunnyside.

6 [background comments, pause]

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay. You may begin.
8 Please identify yourself. Yeah.

9 ADELPHINE PETECHIAE: My name is
10 Adelphine Petechiae [sp?] So it was very close.
11 Thank you so much Chairman Chin for having me--for
12 having me here and, of course, to all of the members
13 of the committee. You have my statement. So I'm
14 going to keep it super short. You know as well, I
15 come from the New York Asian Women's Center and I
16 bring today the lens of elder abuse and abuse in
17 later life when I speak with you. Our agency is the
18 largest in the country that works with Asian
19 survivors of domestic violence of human trafficking
20 and of sexual violence. And we have expanded our
21 services quite intentionally in elder abuse as well,
22 and abuse in later life. So I was here a few months
23 ago giving testimony, and I continue the same
24 statement when I speak with you and ask that the
25

committee continues to support the Elder Abuse Enhancement funds that were allocated \$1 million last year during Fiscal Year 2015.

Secondly, we're requesting your assistance to kindly support our request to the Speaker to please allocated \$200,000 of the Elder Abuse Enhancement Funds to us, to the New York Asian Women's Center, and I will explain why. We heard earlier from the Commissioner and also from other speakers who were giving testimony about the importance when it comes to services about engaging elders, about keeping it culturally appropriate or culturally competent. And there has also been passing mention, but occasional passing mention of the importance of considering elder abuse in the spectrum of the work that we do at all of these different agencies. And the reality is that for Asian elders, number one, they are as I understand it the second largest expanding segment of the elder population in New York City.

In the last decade, they've grown by 54%. If you consider the reality that many of these elders live with their families. Many of them are whether through documentation status or through language or

1 through age or through culture highly isolated. We
2 also then realize that for them to actually come out
3 and access services, especially if they are being
4 abused by stressed out caregivers, by systemic
5 issues, it's going to become very hard for us to be
6 able to reach out to them. And to provide them the
7 supports that exist, mainstream supports and
8 community based supports. So when we ask you for the
9 \$200,000, we're asking that of you for three basic
10 purposes: One is for us to be able to do culturally
11 appropriate sensitive outreach. And that is a very
12 nuanced thing. Please keep in mind that for most of
13 the languages that I represent here on behalf of the
14 agency there is no word for trauma.

16 There is no word for depression. And
17 language is extremely important because it speaks to
18 the subtlety of the communication especially when
19 someone is suffering from abuse. These are people
20 who will prioritize familial piety over their own
21 experience, and will not want to talk about it unless
22 someone is insistent and kind and understands their
23 language. So we would like to do outreach. [bell]
24 We would like to continue to deepen the services of
25 advocacy in the counseling that we provide to the

elders. And we would like to continue training other service providers such as JASA. Such as other community based organizations. Such as law enforcement and the DA's office on being able to provide coordinated response to these survivors. So I ask that you please continue to advocate for us. And, yeah, hopefully we get the 200K.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Next.

HOWARD SHIH: Thank you again to the committee for the opportunity to testify. My name is Howard Shih. I'm the Director of Research and Policy at the Asian-American Federation. We represent a network of 43 member agencies that provide health and social services to the Asian community. And we also work with 15 other affiliates across the country. Like the other testimony or people on the panel, I'm also going to shorten my testimony. You have my full testimony on paper. I want to highlight five particular points about the Asian community and about seniors in general. One, we've already heard a lot that immigrants are becoming a larger and larger part of the senior population. I think that's going to have significance in terms of providing services to that group. Asians are also the fastest growing part

of the senior population. I think the latest statistics are showing that the Asians grew by 80% since 2000, and there are nearly 124,000 Asian in the --Asian seniors in the city now. And then there is a lot of tremendous diversity within that community. Even though the Chinese still are the majority of the Asian senior population, we're seeing the fastest growth occurring in the Indian, Filipino, Korean, Bangladesh, Japanese and Pakistani senior populations.

So as our populations diversity, there is an increasing need to establish new services, new centers to help provide cultural and linguistically appropriate services to them. And Asian seniors face a lot of linguistic and economic challenges. The statistics show that about one in four Asian seniors are living in poverty. That's even higher for the specific subgroups. 35% of Bangladeshi seniors live in poverty and 30% of Asian--Chinese seniors live in poverty. Language barriers are extremely high. Among Chinese, Bangladeshi and Korean seniors about 9 in 10 have limited English proficiency. And we're seeing high rates of English--limited English proficiency even in communities where there are

traditionally a high rate of English speaking. For example, Tagalogic speakers from the Philippines 44% of those seniors that speak that language also are limited English proficient.

To sort of jump ahead, we do have some recommendations for the--for the committee and for the City Council. When you look at the rate of growth in the Chinese and Korean senior populations since 2000, funding for senior centers have definitely not kept up. And we request that more funding be made available to support the--these important community hubs for our seniors. We also support our Meals on Wheels programs. None of the Asian led homebound meals programs receive direct support from the city. They're all subcontracts. We request that contracts [bell] be restructured so that those senior centers can directly contract with the city for those meals in order to maintain their--maintain the integrity of their programs.

We also are requesting that the contract process be amended to acknowledge the Asian led agencies provide--providing services directly to Asian seniors are in the best position to use those additional funds cost-effectively. And we support

1 ongoing efforts to help change that contracting
2 process. We also would like to ask for support in
3 conducting research to identify the most effective
4 programs and the best practice models and demographic
5 changes for the Asian senior population. So that we
6 can work together to most effectively reach those
7 seniors and provide for those service gaps. Thank
8 you.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Next.

11 BETTY ANN LEIBOWITZ: Hi. Thank you very
12 much. My name is Betty Ann Leibowitz, and I'm a
13 client of the Hamilton Senior Center, and the
14 Director asked me Friday afternoon if I could come
15 here to represent people who couldn't make it down
16 here. I never did anything like this before.
17 Anyway, the center has been a godsend for me. I had
18 sciatica a couple of years ago, and I've taken up
19 belly dancing, which I figured would be good for my
20 back and it really is. So I don't want any of these
21 programs cut. But, you know, we have a problem
22 because there is a lot of waste, fraud and abuse in
23 the general budget of the city. My boyfriend used to
24 work in the school system and see what a disaster it
25 was. They'd have like ten--old computers and desks

and all kinds of things line up. And, you know, they bought too much stuff. Let's put it that way.

Anyway, so you may be wondering where are you going to get the money that everybody is requesting.

And I have some suggestions aside from cutting out the waste, fraud and abuse. For example, the gentleman here talking about fitness centers and pools. There are a lot of health clubs that are not being used widely during the day. Maybe our seniors can go there and then the health clubs could get some kind of a tax credit or tax break for taking them in to use their facilities. The Chinese woman who was very loud suggested something with restaurants. Maybe there can be vouchers. Because a lot of restaurants are going out of business. They don't have enough business. So if seniors can go there sometimes maybe for a meal at a very reduced price, maybe that will help the restaurants. Also, speaking of small businesses going out of business, we see a lot of empty stores, and you're going to have like a whole time bomb of these people that are self-employed that don't have pensions. And they're going to get older, and they're going to be poor.

1 So, just as the VA allows people now to
2 go to different doctors as opposed to just being
3 stuck in a hospital that can't handle them, people
4 are much better off and it's much more cost-
5 effective. Obviously, to have people age in place
6 than have all these senior centers, and have all
7 these facilities. As opposed to putting them into
8 nursing homes and then hospitals and the Potter's
9 Field because they can't afford their funerals. I
10 myself am running out of money. The senior center
11 has been a Godsend for me because, you know, I can
12 eat there and do some activities. I don't know how
13 long I can stay in New York. Because as I said, I'm
14 running out of money. But anyway, so the choice is
15 do we kick the can down the road because we've got
16 the population bomb of seniors coming into--you know,
17 aging and getting older and getting, you know, more
18 frail. So can we spend money now to help them stay
19 in their homes, stay healthy? Or, are we going to
20 have a mess later as we're going to have more of them
21 losing their homes, being more homeless and causing
22 more problems and bringing down the city and bringing
23 down everybody? [bell]

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CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Thank you very much to all of you for being here, and as we--I mean we always talk about investing in the senior center, senior services, we're investing in our seniors. And every time I go to visit a senior center I'm just amazed that they're so happy and healthy, and they help the city save money. So I think we really need to continue our investment in senior services. And thank you all for the great work that you do.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay. Our last panel. Carol--Carol Barn--Ban from Isabella Geriatric Center; Natasha De Leon from Vision Services for the Blind; Tom Connor, Circle in the Square. I think he went--I think he went to lunch at the senior center.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Fenninger--Fenninger from?

FEMALE SPEAKER: [off mic] They submitted their testimony.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, they submitted their testimony. A Group from HAI. Are they still here?

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FEMALE SPEAKER: [off mic] They
submitted.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, they submitted
testimony. Okay, Bonnie Williams from Penn South
Program for Seniors. Oh, okay. Anybody else that
signed up to testify that we didn't call? Okay, you
may begin.

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: You can just turn
the mic on there.

CAROL BAN: Oh, there we go. Okay. I'm
Carol Ban, Director of Aging in Place Programs at
Isabella in Washington Heights, and I want to thank
both of you and the committee for your incredible
commitment to advocating for the seniors. Obviously,
you are very in touch with what's going on in the
city, and we really are grateful to you. I also want
to thank the Council for the inclusion of
discretionary dollars for the current Neighborhood
NORCs this fiscal year. And I'm going to speak in
support of baseline the DFTA funding for Neighborhood
NORC programs. Washington Heights in Northern
Manhattan is home to a very large Spanish Speaking
older adult immigrant community striving to survive

on incomes well below the poverty line, often under \$10,000. The majority, as you know, never completed elementary school, and face literacy challenges in both English and Spanish. They live in poorly maintained six-story tenement walk-up buildings in need of major repairs with single rooms, or with large extended families in crowded conditions. And profound challenges in accessing quality healthcare along with other barriers have led to high rates of diabetes and hypertension as compared to other aging New York City communities. These seniors live with a lot of stress, which the NORC programs mitigate through their--through individual and group services, home visits, activities that provide empowerment, meaning and spiritual sustenance and concrete assistance in everyway possible.

As we know, low-income immigrant seniors face challenges beyond those faced by the general aging population. Navigating the maze of government benefits and entitlements, and navigating the healthcare system requires the assistance of NORCs and professionals. Many of our clients don't have access to a primary care physician, and by necessity they use the emergency room when systematic. The

complexity of tasks involved in managing one's multiple chronic health conditions, as those of us who have them know, from filling prescriptions to taking the meds properly. To knowing that when you need a specialist. Even how to contact your doctor. These are all overwhelming tasks. And require a helping hand that the NORC team of trusted nurses and social workers provide guiding the seniors and managing their health on an ongoing basis. And these services are critical to ensuring to ensuring older people stay healthy, and medically stable and out of the emergency room and out of the hospital as well. As people are living longer, we are really seeing the older population growing in our NORCs, 85 to 100. And many of those frail seniors they may not be eligible for home care services. But they require monitoring, and the safety net that the NORC program provides. The Neighborhood NORC also has a unique opportunity to keep those living in the shadow engage with others, and encourage an atmosphere of mutual assistance among neighbors.

Dementia is also on the rise, and we are finding ourselves [bell] increasingly holding case conferences with families. Without us, they wouldn't

1 know where to turn, or even that their family member
2 has dementia. Isolation is very prevalent especially
3 for those, you know, living in upper floors. They
4 start to decline. They can't pay their bills. They
5 can't get their benefits. They don't have a phone.
6 It just becomes a nightmare. And we do a lot of
7 outreach initiatives, both the staff and NORC members
8 aimed at identifying the isolated seniors.
9

10 I just wanted to mention a few more
11 things. Relationship building and cultural
12 familiarity is the cornerstone of the NORC.
13 Comprehensive case management and intensive case
14 management have now become essential services to
15 ensure the health and safety of our growing elders,
16 and to prevent the increased homelessness, wandering
17 and unnecessary injury or worse that we are bound to
18 see among our growing population of cognitively
19 impaired and isolated seniors if there are
20 insufficient services to bolster them.
21 Unfortunately, our source funding does not put a dent
22 in this growing need that I'm describing from
23 comprehensive social work and healthcare services.
24 Our one social service worker provides case
25 management to 200 members annually, and these are

ongoing members. The City Discretionary Council Funding was able to--we were able to hire an MSW to focus on intensive case management clients, and to make the impression screenings more routine among our general core service clients. But when the funding ends in June, these services will also disappear. So we urge you to--urge the city to put more money in and thank you so much for listening.

NATASHA DE LEON. Hi. My name is Natasha De Leon and I'm the Volunteer Coordinator for Vision Services for Blind and Visually Impaired along with my Director Miller [sic] who wasn't able to be here. So I'm reading her testimony. On behalf of Vision Services for Blind and Visually Impaired, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important service for city seniors. Vision is an innovator of service delivery and we strive to meet the needs of New York City youth, adults and seniors living with vision loss. Visions provides free services for the low-income, multi disabled and ethnically diverse individuals and families. We focus on assisting seniors with vision loss and with developing and maintaining healthier lifestyles. Providing an atmosphere that encourages social

connection ensuring they all receive information in their format of choice, and can access counseling and support. Support--opportunities for physical education seminars and adaptive technology training, photography, sculpture classes, cultural events, and intergenerational services. Visions also sponsors Blind Mind, a database and call center that provides information and referrals to resources and connects blind New York City residents with the New York City Council website.

Visions is an 88-year old non-profit organization that provides free services to over 6,000 individuals giving us direct--direct and extensive experience on how Access-A-Ride service impacts our clients. More than half of Vision's clients are over 60, and our majority has low incomes. Through the funding from New York City's Department of Aging and the New York City Council members. Vision's Senior Center has over 600 registered participants, and a caregiver support program with an enrollment of over 750. There is an ongoing growing need for transportation services for our seniors with a vision loss. It's important to note that have hundreds of participants that use

Access-A-Ride, and we have Visions' employees and interns with vision loss that use Access-A-Ride as well.

Below are just a few quotes from employees and seniors regarding the problems with Access-A-Ride services. You can't rely on them to pick you up on time. There is no way to use GPS to locate the drivers any more. I experienced dispatchers telling me the driver will arrive in five or ten minutes, and it's over an hour later. I think drivers need some formal training in how to work with people who are disabled, especially people with vision loss. Drivers need to pay more attention to addresses when picking up people. I live in a complex of multiple buildings, and the numbers of drivers are consistently pulling up to the wrong building and then complaining that I am not at the right location. I am an elderly woman and I can't deal with shared rides, which are extremely long. I have many experiences where drivers pick up people after me and drop them off first, making me late to my appointment. It might be helpful if the dispatcher plans the routes better, and everyone can get to their destinations closer to their times as

possible. One example, I was picked up at 7:00 a.m. from Queens Points of Vision at Sellas Manor at 23rd Street in Chelsea, and I did not arrive until 11:30. [bell] The class I attend begins at 10:30.

Permanent expansion of the Taxi Smart Card to e-hail pilots. While currently a pilot program in just two city neighborhoods, we strongly recommend that the Taxi Smart Card Program or something similar should be made permanent expanding the citywide amenity. Allowing eligible Access-A-Ride consumers to use Tele-Green Taxi or for hire vehicles where the travel allows for maximum flexibility. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, thank you for your testimony. Especially on Access-A-Ride we're going to have a special hearing just on that. So I think it's in April, but definitely we will get the information out. It will be together with the Transportation Committee. So thank you all for coming today, and we'll look forward to seeing all of you in the budget--during the budget process, and hope to see back in the Executive Budget hearing and with some good news. So I thank my Co-Chair Council Member Peter Vallone. Yes, sir.

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MALE SPEAKER: [off mic]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Why don't we talk afterwards, and we'll take down your questions and we'll find the answer for you. Okay?

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Nothing more to say.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: All right. I want to thank all the council members especially my Co-Chair Council Member Peter Vallone for chairing this hearing today.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: [interposing] My brother isn't very happy, Paul. [laughs]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Paul, Paul. [laughs] You know why? Because it's your--his birthday today. So wish him a happy birthday, and thank Council Member Paul Vallone.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And the hearing is adjourned.

[gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 27, 2015