

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH,  
DISABILITIES AND ADDICTION

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July 13, 2023  
Start: 11:31 a.m.  
Recess: 11:41 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Linda Lee  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Shaun Abreu  
Diana Ayala  
Erik D. Bottcher  
Tiffany Cabán  
Shahana K. Hanif  
Darlene Mealy  
Nantasha M. Williams

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

1 COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH, DISABILITIES AND ADDICTION 3

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet please. Good  
3 morning and welcome to today's Committee on Mental  
4 Health, Disabilities and Addictions. Place all  
5 electronic devices to vibrate mode. Thank you for  
6 your cooperation. Chair, we are ready to begin.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Good morning or  
8 afternoon. Morning everyone. My name is Linda Lee  
9 Chair of the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities  
10 and Addiction. Just wanted to recognize our Council  
11 Members who are here today. Just want to recognize  
12 our Council Members that are here today. We have  
13 Council Member Cabán, of course Majority Leader  
14 Powers, Bottcher, Mealy, Williams, and I know we have  
15 Council Member Hanif on Zoom, as well as Deputy  
16 Speaker Ayala on Zoom, and so-- and I believe Council  
17 Member Abreu's on his way. so, today our Committee  
18 is holding a vote on four pieces of legislation from  
19 the Mental Health Roadmap, Intro number 1018A and  
20 1019A, both of which I'm a sponsor, and Intro number  
21 1021 sponsored by Majority Leader Powers, and Intro  
22 number 1022 sponsored by Council Member Riley.  
23 Before we begin, I want to reiterate that the Mental  
24 Health Roadmap is a point of departure outlining  
25 goals that are designed to expand on existing

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2 prevention and supportive services, invest in our  
3 mental healthcare workforce, confront harmful  
4 intersections between the mental health and criminal  
5 justice systems, facilitate safe and appropriate  
6 connections to care for all New Yorkers, and bolster  
7 public awareness of available resources and where to  
8 receive them. The Roadmap is by no means an  
9 exhaustive list of what the City needs, but is  
10 instead of a living document that will continue to  
11 grow alongside the mental healthcare needs of New  
12 Yorkers. For today's vote, I'm proud to sponsor both  
13 1018A and 1019A. I'm particularly proud of 1018A  
14 which will provide necessary oversight over the  
15 Mayor's controversial and involuntarily removal and  
16 transport directive. And at this time-- well,  
17 actually, before I let Majority Leader speak, just  
18 wanted to recognize Council Member Abreu who has  
19 joined. And so I'd like to turn over to Majority  
20 Leader Powers for his statement.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you, Chair  
22 Lee and the rest of the committee for your work on  
23 this package of legislation today and the Mental  
24 Health Roadmap. Today, we plan to pass final  
25 portions of that package, bills that enhance the way

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2 we analyze and deliver mental healthcare to meet our  
3 neighbors in crisis. Among these is my bill Intro  
4 1021 which will require the opening of new crisis  
5 respite centers in New York City to join the ones  
6 that are already open. This peer-based model of care  
7 provides residents with a place to find a flexible  
8 and temporary support structure to work through their  
9 mental health crisis or to prevent it from reaching  
10 more acute levels, all while allowing them to  
11 continue their daily work and family activities  
12 outside the facility. Crisis respite centers provide  
13 a critical alternative to hospitalization, especially  
14 as we have seen hospital facilities slash psychiatric  
15 beds capacity in recent decades. On a recent visit  
16 to one center I heard directly from the providers and  
17 the residents about how effective and important  
18 option they are to the continuum of care the City  
19 provides. And just on a personal note, I live two  
20 blocks away from that center. I've never even known  
21 it was there, and when I did walk in and speaking to  
22 the folks there, the ability to get care while also  
23 continuing their daily lives was a rally, really good  
24 model in a small setting for those folks before they  
25 fall through the cracks get an opportunity for a

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2 landing spot where they can stabilize themselves.

3 And for anyone who will-- like I know, and I know

4 folks will raise concerns, fears about new facilities

5 opening in their district, I can tell you I've walked

6 past this one millions of times, right next to where

7 I went to school as a child. It is not even known

8 for folks that it's there-- blends right into the

9 community. And four of these crisis centers are

10 already open with city funding. Today's legislation

11 will double that number. I want to thank everyone at

12 the City Council who worked and negotiated hard to

13 get Intro 1021 and other bills drafted to the finish

14 line, Sarah Sucher [sp?], Sarah Liss [sp?], Christy

15 Dwyer [sp?], Smita Deshmuk [sp?], Nick Connell [sp?],

16 Charles Kim [sp?], Natalie Meltzer [sp?], and members

17 of my team. I want to particularly give a shout out

18 to Pedro Carillo [sp?] from my team who's been

19 working on this package of this legislation and bills

20 on this for a very, very long time, and very glad to

21 see this get passed today with his hard work. I want

22 to of course thank Speaker Adams, her office, and of

23 course, Chair Lee for spearheading this landmark

24 effort, and I want to thank all the advocates and

25 providers that helped inform this legislation and

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2 carry out the work on the ground including Community  
3 Access, Transitional Services for New York, SUS, and  
4 many others, and I want to congratulate Council  
5 Member Riley and Chair Lee on their bills as part of  
6 this package today. this is a step in a process to  
7 make sure that New Yorkers get the mental healthcare  
8 that they need, but I do think it's an important one,  
9 and when you actually talk to people who will get the  
10 care and this will save and help their lives, you  
11 will be instantly-- you will instantly recognize how  
12 important the work is. So, thank you today and  
13 encourage all my colleagues to vote aye.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Thank you. And I'll  
15 turn it over to Council Member Bottcher for a few  
16 words.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you so  
18 much, Chair Lee, and thanks to all my colleagues.  
19 Today, the City Council is addressing a very serious  
20 problem in our approach to addressing the mental  
21 health crisis in New York City and that is the major  
22 gaps in the continuum of care for people with serious  
23 mental illness. What we witness every day on the  
24 ground in Council District Three and the Council  
25 District I represent, we've had the most number of

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2 calls for people experiencing mental health crisis  
3 last year, the most anywhere in the City. What we  
4 are seeing every day is people cycling in and out of  
5 the emergency room, in and out of emergency  
6 psychiatric care. Going to the emergency room, they  
7 might spend a day. They might spend a few hours.  
8 They might spend two days. Right back out onto the  
9 street, back into the shelters. The bill that the  
10 Council is passing today requiring the establishment  
11 of respite centers, Council Member Powers' bill, that  
12 is so important because the City has not moved nearly  
13 fast enough on setting up these respite centers,  
14 places for people to get stabilized, but even after  
15 someone gets stabilized, gets back on their feet,  
16 they might even get into supportive housing, we need  
17 to provide networks for them to stay stabilized, and  
18 that's where the Clubhouse Network comes in, places  
19 like Fountain House. Because we forget that people  
20 need stuff to do all day long. We can't expect folks  
21 just to stay home all day and watch Netflix. They  
22 need opportunities for friendship, for socializing,  
23 for vocational opportunity, and that's what the  
24 clubhouses will provide, but the City has also not  
25 moved nearly as fast as they should on establishing



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2 clubhouses. So, Council Member Riley's bill that  
3 would require the City to set up clubhouses-- because  
4 I believe that like 35 Council Districts don't have a  
5 clubhouse or a respite center. So, today, the City  
6 Council's taking concrete action to address these  
7 issues. I'm so proud to be part of this body. I want  
8 to thank all the staff who made this possible and all  
9 my colleagues. Thank you so much.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Thank you, Council  
11 Member Bottcher. So thank you. In closing, I would  
12 like to thank Committee Staff Sarah Sucher, as well  
13 as Christie Dwyer for their work on all of these  
14 pieces of legislation as well as my own team, and I  
15 believe we're ready to begin the vote.

16 COUNCIL CLERK: Good morning. William  
17 Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on  
18 Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction. All items  
19 are coupled. Chair Lee?

20 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Aye on all.

21 COUNCIL CLERK: Ayala?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Aye on all.

23 COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you. Abreu?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Aye.

25 COUNCIL CLERK: Cabán?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Aye on all.

3 COUNCIL CLERK: Bottcher?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Aye.

5 COUNCIL CLERK: Hanif?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Aye on all.

7 COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you. Mealy?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: May I explain my  
9 vote? I just want to take a opportunity to salute  
10 all the sponsors of the legi-- common sense  
11 legislation, and this will help people stay and  
12 active, like you said, not just Netflix, but the  
13 stories and all that other stuff. People like to  
14 stay home. But I'm glad and I'm looking forward to  
15 have one in my district. I vote aye on all.

16 COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you. Williams?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I vote aye on  
18 all.

19 COUNCIL CLERK: By a vote of 8 in the  
20 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,  
21 all items have been adopted by the Committee. And  
22 Madam Chair, that is a full committee.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Thank you so much. Do  
24 I have to-- oh, adjourned.

25 [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 July 14, 2023