



# Healthcare Policy Roundup

June 12, 2018

## Catch the Highlights!

- *Federal prosecutors publish report highlighting NYCHA health & safety violations*
- *New York State pilots Swedish suicide intervention program*
- *City Council passes several bills around opioid overdose prevention*

## Questions? Comments?

Email:

[ksabatino@chnnyc.org](mailto:ksabatino@chnnyc.org)

## Federal prosecutors expose ongoing NYCHA issues:

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and Mayor Bill de Blasio have come under fire once more after federal prosecutors released a [report](#) detailing years of health and safety violations in NYCHA housing complexes throughout New York City. The official complaint concludes a two-year investigation highlighting serious oversight on the part of the de Blasio Administration.

According to the report, 19 lead-poisoned children were found to have been exposed to deteriorated lead paint in their NYCHA apartments between 2010 and 2016. Prosecutors claim that NYCHA authorities have known since 2011 that the agency was violating lead paint regulations under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Other documented violations include lack of heat during winter months, mold and pest-infested apartments, and broken elevators which often left disabled and elderly tenants stranded in apartment lobbies.

According to the report, NYCHA covered up a 400,000 work order backlog by removing needed work from its books and suspending all annual apartment inspections for two years. Following the report's release, Mayor Bill de Blasio signed a consent decree committing \$1 billion over the next four years and \$200 million in subsequent years to address reported violations throughout NYCHA's 325 complexes.

## New York State tests Swedish suicide intervention model:

In response to a growing number of suicides throughout New York and the country, the Cuomo Administration is highlighting a new program aimed at preventing future attempts among individuals who have unsuccessfully completed suicide. The announcement comes days after fashion designer Kate Spade and food writer Anthony Bourdain died by suicide.

The Attempted Suicide Short Intervention Program is based on a Swedish model that looks at the circumstances leading to attempted suicide rather than simply viewing suicide as a symptom of mental illness. Through a series of one-on-one sessions, clinicians work with patients to develop a safety plan to prevent future attempts and keep in contact for several months after regular sessions have finished. In a 2016 study, patients undergoing treatment through this model had significantly less suicide attempts than those given traditional therapy.

The NYS program is being piloted at the Hutchings Psychiatric Center in Syracuse and is funded through a \$3.5 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). At the same time, the NYS chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness is pushing for legislation that would allow a court to prevent individuals who may be at risk to themselves or to others from buying or owning a gun.

## City Council passes Opioid and Drug Treatment & Prevention legislation:

Last Thursday, the New York City Council passed seven bills focused on combatting the opioid epidemic. The Opioid and Drug Treatment and Prevention Package includes legislation around opioid education, distribution, and treatment.

In two bills sponsored by Council Members Ritchie Torres and Diana Ayala, the Council directs the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to codify existing overdose prevention and reversal trainings and to provide opioid antagonists (e.g., naloxone) to citywide syringe exchange programs. Council Member Justin Brannan also sponsored two bills that direct DOHMH to develop age-appropriate opioid education materials for students and youth service programs, and for the Department of Education (DOE) to incorporate opioid-related education into all public school curriculums.

The remaining three bills require the New York City police and fire departments to regularly report on administration of opioid reversal drugs and for the Department of Social Services to refer individuals receiving opioid antagonists to additional prevention and treatment services. The package of bills comes at the heels of a recent report supporting the efficacy of safe injection facilities in combatting growing rates of overdose.

