



BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT VANESSA L. GIBSON
BRONX HEALTH MATTERS
 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION NEWSLETTER

2022 Issue 2

Table of Contents

- 1** There's No Bite to Take out of the Big Apple

- 3** Polio Reemergence: The Quick Facts

- 4** Events with the BP and Local Health Partners

- 6** The News COVID-19 Booster: What You Need to Know

- 6** Did You Know? 32 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

- 7** Vaccine Info Hub

- 8** Upcoming Events: The BP's 31 Days of Domestic Violence Awareness

Newsletter Staff

Editor-in-Chief **Dr. Nancy Kheck**
 Copy Editors **Rubashruti Kanna**
 Mahnor Jaura
 Eric Pesner
 Lead Author **Taylor Dennis**
 Contributors **Rubashruti Kanna**
 Communications **Michael Ivory**
 Gabriel Valdez

THERE'S NO BITE TO TAKE OUT OF THE BIG APPLE



Written by Taylor Dennis | Edited by Mahnoor Jaura

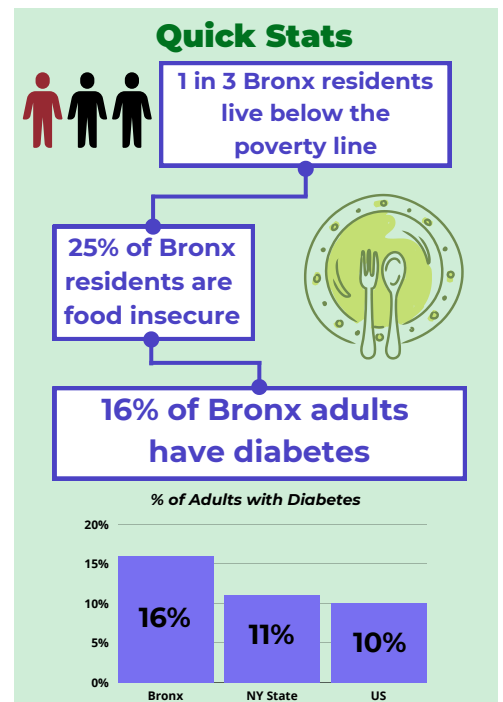
The ability to access healthy and nutritious food is essential to health and well-being. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, food insecurity is the uncertainty or limited availability of safe and nutritionally appropriate food. The Bronx has one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the country. More than 375,000 people in The Bronx experience food insecurity, meaning one in four residents report feeling food insecure.

According to the 2020 Food Metrics Report released by the city, there was a “meal gap” in 2018 of 42.5 million meals in The Bronx alone. This means that individuals in The Bronx skipped that many meals over the course of that year. The Bronx has always been a borough with limited access to nutritious food. Parts of the borough are food deserts, where nutrition and food access are hard to come by. This means that there are insufficient supermarkets and grocery stores in the neighborhood to meet the needs of the community.



Many of these communities have large numbers of bodegas, which are able to provide food but are quite often lacking in the fresh fruit and vegetables necessary for a balanced diet. Many of these neighborhoods are also food swamps, areas where there are unhealthy food options such as fast food but which are lacking in healthy options. Aside from delis and fast food chains, many Bronx residents are dependent on food donations and food pantries to meet their food needs. Because of this, many Bronx residents suffer from a plethora of chronic

continued on pg. 2



"The Bronx has always been a borough with limited access to nutritious food."

chronic illnesses connected with diet, including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and heart conditions that put people at high risk of death. According to the DOHMH, diabetes is one of the leading causes of death in New York City. Currently, The Bronx has the highest diabetes prevalence among the five boroughs.

Type 2 diabetes is a chronic health condition that is primarily characterized by a person's body not making enough insulin or not being able to use the insulin their body produces. Insulin is a hormone produced in the pancreas which regulates the amount of glucose in the blood. Lack of insulin production or function results in high blood sugar levels. These elevated sugar levels can lead to severe health issues, including stroke, kidney disease, and heart disease.

There is no cure for diabetes; however, regular exercise, eating a healthy and balanced diet, taking medication, and self-care reduce the impact. In the United States today, more than one in three adults have pre-diabetes, where the blood sugar levels are elevated, but not high enough for a diagnosis. Pre-diabetes significantly increases a person's risk for Type 2 diabetes. However, 84 percent of people do not even know that they have pre-diabetes, a condition that can be reversed through lifestyle changes.

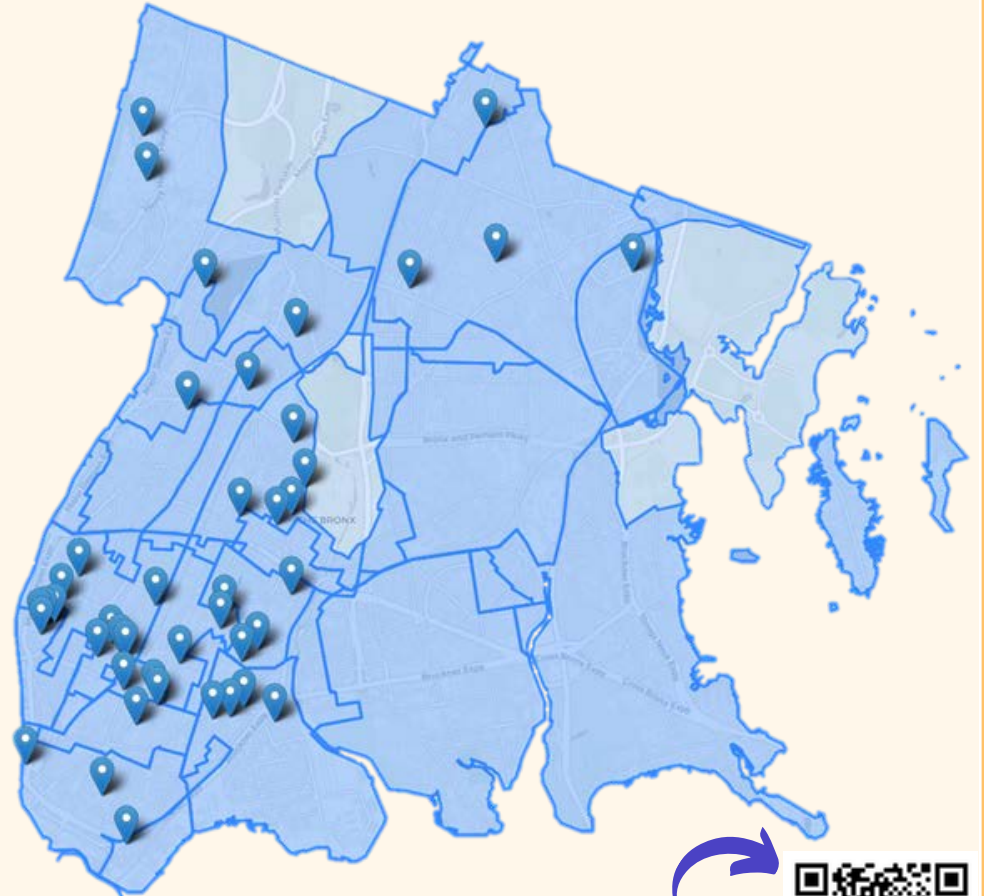
Finding Solutions

All New Yorkers deserve access to enough healthy food for themselves and their families. The city must enact policies to ensure that families can purchase the food they need and refocus efforts on the prevention and management of diabetes.

Increase Access

Efforts have been made to help provide fresh fruit and vegetables to neighborhoods identified as food deserts and food swamps. The city has

Community Food Gardens in The Bronx



Scan the QR Code to explore [an interactive map of all our local Bronx community gardens](#) - find one near you today!



pioneered the use of green markets on city streets to provide more fresh produce to our communities. There are also a growing number of farmers' markets and community gardens that provide food in these neighborhoods.

Education

Nutritional education is crucial in managing diabetes and other health conditions. We must collaborate with the Bronx health and education sectors to teach students healthy eating habits, healthy and affordable recipes, portion control, and the importance of preventative care through nutrition.

The Center for Food as Medicine has successfully taught people the

importance of food and how food can be used to nourish our bodies. Funding initiatives like these and incorporating food education through food garden exhibitions, school education programs, and community centers will enable the next generation of Bronxites to make healthy choices and avoid diabetes.

Community Gardens

Local governments should allocate funds for community gardens. Community gardens provide a valuable resource to local neighborhoods. Not only do they help produce food for local communities, they also serve as recreational or outdoor space to stay active. Community gardens most often donate food to support local

continued on pg. 3

food banks and pantries. GrowNYC has built over 150 new gardens, which include GreenThumb community gardens, under the leadership of the NYC Parks Department. Last year, its community gardening program produced 87,000 pounds of food in 553 community gardens. The Borough

President fully supports the GreenThumb program in The Bronx's community gardens to produce food for local communities.

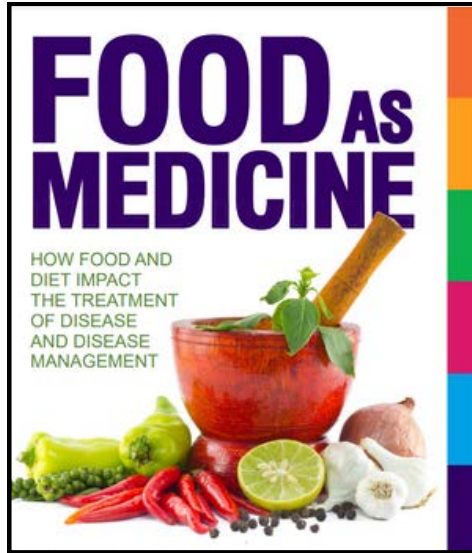
Borough President Collaborations

The Bronx Borough President's Office is adamant in reducing food insecurity, diabetes, and related conditions, as well as advocating for better access to nutritious foods for Bronx residents. The BBP office has hosted events and collaborated with organizations including Bronx Health REACH, Planned Parenthood, community activists, community gardens, and non-profit organizations. The Borough President is committed to

building enduring partnerships with all our local health partners to understand the specific community health needs and to advance progressive nutrition legislation with a focus on vulnerable populations including children, seniors, and homeless individuals.

As a previous member of the City Council, Borough President Gibson sponsored legislation passed in 2020 that required the Mayor's Office of Food Policy (MOFP) to develop a 10-year food policy plan. The plan sets goals to reduce hunger, improve nutrition, increase access to healthy food, reduce food waste, develop food and farm economies, and increase urban agriculture and sustainability. The

MOFP released its first plan in February 2021. The Borough President is committed to seeing the recommendations of the report into completion over the coming years.



In March of 2022, The Center for Food As Medicine and The Hunter College NYC Food Policy Center released a review and report demonstrating the impact of food and diet on health, specifically regarding food-related diseases.

Polio Reemergence: The Quick Facts

What is polio?

Polio, or poliomyelitis, is a disabling and life-threatening disease caused by the poliovirus. Though there are often no visible symptoms, 1 out of 4 people with polio will have flu-like symptoms (sore throat, fever, nausea, and headache). A smaller proportion of people with polio will develop serious conditions including **meningitis** (infection of the covering of the spinal cord and/or brain) and/or **paralysis** (can't move parts of the body).

How does it spread?

Polio is considered very contagious and spreads mostly from person to person, through contaminated water and via fecal particles. It was eliminated from the US in 1979, but due to inconsistent vaccination rates in certain areas, the virus has reemerged and has been found in New York City sewage.

Aren't most Americans vaccinated against polio already?

Yes- U.S. children are routinely vaccinated against polio with 3 doses and the shots are considered to be highly effective.

On September 9, 2022, NY Governor Kathy Hochul declared a state of emergency over the growing polio outbreak.

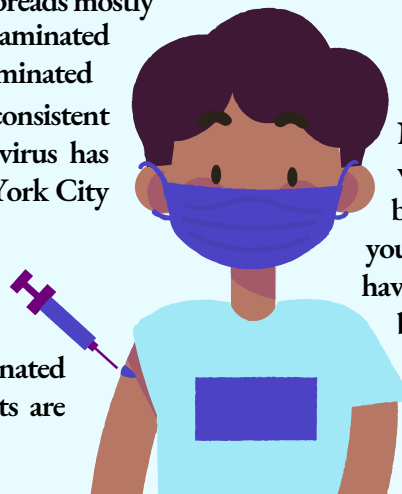
The first polio case in nearly a decade was identified in July in New York State.

If I am already vaccinated, do I need to do anything?

No. If you were born after 1955, when the polio vaccine was first introduced, you likely have been vaccinated. See a health provider to access your immunization records to check if you have been vaccinated.

What should I do if I am unvaccinated?

See our newsletter's Vaccine Info Hub on page 7 to find out where to get vaccinated!



BP HEALTH EVENTS

WITH
LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTNERS

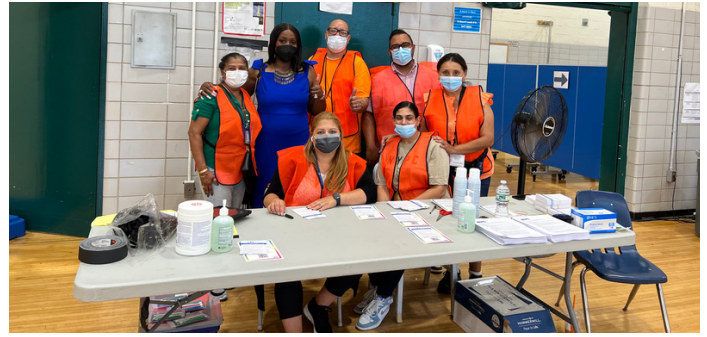
BOROUGH WIDE SCIENCE FAIR

June 1 - NYC Dept. of Education Zerega Family Welcome Center



MONKEYPOX POP-UP VACCINATION SITE

The Bronx High School of Science



NYC SUMMER MEALS PROGRAM EVENT

July 1 - P.S./I.S. 218



ABORTION ACCESS AND REPRODUCTIVE CARE PRESS CONFERENCE

June 30 - Borough Hall



EMBLEMHEALTH WELLNESS EXPO

June 25 - Gouverneur Playground



FOOD DISTRIBUTION WITH INSTACART

July 11 - Willis Avenue 7th Day Adventist Church



32ND ANNUAL RECOGNITION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

July 26th - Help on the Way, 1344 Southern Boulevard



BELVIS HEALTH FAIR

July 27 - NYC H+H/Gotham Health Belvis



FIBROID FIGHTERS AWARENESS RECEPTION

July 28th - Fibroid Fighters



The New COVID-19 Booster Shot

What you need to know

Why do I need this booster?

Booster doses ensure that New Yorkers have continued protection against the virus. Getting the booster shot not only protects you, but also protects those who cannot be vaccinated, such as infants and immunocompromised individuals. That's why New York State encourages all eligible New Yorkers to get their booster dose.

What are the side effects of the booster shots?

Side effects are similar to those associated with current vaccines, including redness and swelling where the shot was administered, as well as occasional fatigue, headache and muscle soreness.

If we need a booster, does that mean that the vaccines aren't working?

No. COVID-19 vaccines are working very well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, even against widely circulating variants. It is normal

for a vaccine's protection to wane over time, and a booster dose will help maximize protection, prolong the vaccine's durability, and continue to safeguard our communities against the virus.

Does this Omicron-specific booster entirely replace the other boosters?

The updated Pfizer booster is recommended for everyone 5 and older, and the updated Moderna booster for everyone 6 and older. The new booster shot is a bivalent vaccine, meaning that it targets two versions of the coronavirus: the original strain, and the Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5. The previous booster shot targeted only the original version of the virus.

If I already had COVID, should I still get my booster dose?

Yes, you should be vaccinated because research has not yet shown how long you are protected from getting

COVID-19 again after you recover from COVID-19, and because vaccination helps protect you even if you've already had COVID-19. Individuals who have recently recovered from COVID-19 should delay booster vaccination until 3 months after their positive test result.



What about children under 5?

Children younger than 5 years should get the same vaccine for their second (and third) doses of their primary series as they received for their first dose. They will be considered fully vaccinated two weeks after either their third Pfizer dose or second Moderna dose. Kids under the age of 5 currently cannot receive the new booster.

Adapted from NYS DOH, The New York Times, and The Washington Post.

▶ DID YOU KNOW?

Marking 32 Years of The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

On July 26, 1990, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed into law. The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications, and access to state and local government programs and services.

Reactivation of the Borough President's Disability Advisory Council

On July 26th, 2022, the 32nd anniversary of the ADA, Borough President Gibson announced the reactivation of the Borough President's Disability Advisory Council. On the same day, the Borough President's Office hosted a food distribution event in partnership with Help on the Way, a local nonprofit that provides an array of services to children and adults with developmental disabilities. While addressing the Help on the Way's clients and staff, the Borough President reaffirmed her commitment to those living with disabilities: "It is important for our office to prioritize the important issues that matter to our residents living

with disabilities while promoting inclusivity and equity. I look forward to working with our Advisory Council and advocates in developing a blueprint to support ADA compliance in our borough's infrastructure, eliminating barriers to equality, and connecting residents to accessible and critical resources."



Introducing the Vaccine Info Hub

A one-stop shop for must-know vaccination guidelines and resources



Polio Vaccine

What it does: The polio vaccine protects against severe disease caused by poliovirus in almost everyone (99 out of 100) who has received all the recommended doses.

Who is eligible: All children should get four doses of poliovirus vaccine, starting at age 2 months. People starting the vaccine series after age 4 should receive a total of three doses.

How to get vaccinated: If you or your child are not vaccinated yet, talk to a health care provider. If you do not have a provider, call 311 or 844-NYC-4NYC (844-692-4692) for help finding one. Also, children ages 4 years and older can get low- or no-cost vaccines at the NYC Health Department's Fort Greene Health Center at 295 Flatbush Ave. Ext., Fifth Floor, Brooklyn, NY. To make an appointment, visit:

www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/services/immunization-clinics.page.

Flu Seasonal Vaccine

What it does: Influenza (flu) vaccines protect against the four influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season. Getting the flu vaccine can keep you from getting the flu and reduces severity of illness in people who get vaccinated but still get sick.

Who is eligible: Everyone 6 months and older in the United States should get a flu vaccine every season with rare exception.

How to get vaccinated: The 2022-2023 flu vaccine is available at most pharmacies, local hospitals, and community health centers. Find a location near you at <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>

Monkeypox (MPV) Vaccine

What it does: It prevents smallpox and monkeypox prior to infection. There are two doses given 4 weeks apart.

Who is eligible: 1) People of any sexual orientation or gender identity who have or may have multiple or anonymous sex partners; 2) People of any sexual orientation or gender identity whose sex partners are eligible per the criteria above; 3) People who know or suspect they have been exposed to MPV in the last 14 days; 4) Anyone else who considers themselves to be at risk for MPV through sex or other intimate contact. *If you have had MPV, you are currently not eligible to get a first or second dose.

How to get vaccinated: In The Bronx, vaccines are available at NYC Dept. of Health Clinics, Lincoln Hospital, and select private medical clinics and centers. You can make your appointment at <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/locations/Monkeypox> or by calling 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692).

Coronavirus Updated Booster

What it does: The new booster targets the Omicron subvariant BA.5, the currently dominant version of the virus. It helps restore protection that has waned since previous vaccination and will protect against severe illness from all COVID-19 strains.

Who is eligible: Updated COVID-19 vaccine boosters are now available for everyone 5 and older who received their most recent vaccine dose at least two months ago. The updated Pfizer booster is recommended for everyone 5 and older, and the updated Moderna booster for everyone 6 and older. You can choose which booster to get.

How to get boosted: The new vaccine is available at pharmacies, local hospitals, and community health centers. Find a location near you at <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>.

Upcoming BP Health Events

This October, BP Gibson is launching
31 Days of Domestic Violence Awareness.

Every day of October, the BP's Office is promoting boroughwide events to raise awareness and provide free resources/services to support domestic violence victims.

Join us for the BP's featured events and more:

October
15

5th Annual 5K Run/Walk/Roll to End Domestic Violence

The Office of the Bronx District Attorney & The Bronx Borough President's Office

Where: E 161st Street between Grand Concourse and Walton Avenue



Register here!

Link: https://www.bronxda.nyc.gov/downloads/pdf/pr/2022/web-2022-5K_DV.pdf

Domestic Violence 101 Workshop

The Bronx Borough President's Office, The Mayor's Office ENDGBV & African Services Committee

Where: Borough Hall, 851 Grand Concourse

Register here!

Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/domestic-violence-101-workshop-for-community-faith-based-leaders-tickets-434191677997>



October
18

For the full calendar with all 31 days of events,
visit <https://bronxboropres.nyc.gov/events/>

For mental health
crises

call 988

Para crisis
de salud mental

llame 988

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free, compassionate, and confidential care and support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This includes mental health, substance use, suicide, and emotional crises.

If you or a loved one are in crisis,
call/text 988 to be connected with a trained crisis counselor
(para español, presione 2 después de marcar 988).

Interpretation services are available in over 150 languages.

What happens when you call?

In NYC, calls will be directed to the NYC Well 24/7 Hotline where mental health professionals provide support and referrals for treatments and resources.

If needed, the hotline staff can dispatch a Mobile Crisis Team, which includes mental health professionals, to an urgent but "non-emergency" situation.

***In the event of an emergency**, or when someone is at immediate risk of harming themselves or others, the NYC Department of Health recommends calling 911 instead of 988. Calls to one line can be transferred to the other.

Adapted from nyc.gov, fcc.gov, 988lifeline.org, The City, and the NYS OMH

QR Corner

Check out these local resources & services and interesting health articles!

The Bronx
Health Link
Women & Infant
Health Advocacy



Bronx Health
REACH
Health and Social
Needs Services

Montefiore
Medical Center
Community
Relations



Food as Medicine
How Food & Diet Impact the Treatment
of Disease and Disease Management
*NYC Food Policy
Center Report*

For more news & updates,
follow the Borough President's
social media!



<https://bronxboropres.nyc.gov/>



@bronxbpgibson



@bronxbp



webmail@bronxbp.nyc.gov



(718)-590-3500