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Assemblymember Latrice Walker
Assembly District 55

Councilmember Aliko Ampry-Samuel
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EAST BROOKLYN CALL TO ACTION FOR HEALTH AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

East Brooklyn Congregations • Pitkin Avenue BID
BMS Family Health and Wellness Centers
In 2016, various health service providers and organizations came together to conduct the first Participatory Action Research Project for Brownsville and East New York. The research was designed and carried out by young people from Brownsville and East New York. It was guided by one core question, “How do we mobilize the Brownsville and East New York communities to address the social, physical and environmental inequalities that affect health?”

Below are some of the key findings from the study:

- Less than half of respondents rated their own health as “Very Good” or “Excellent,” and this figure was even lower among women than men. Residents face significant barriers to increased physical activity, including inaccessible and unaffordable facilities, a lack of connection and support, and social challenges such as violence and sexism.

- Over half indicated that there was at least one day per week when they could not eat nutritious meals, and for one quarter of respondents, this was most days or every day. Similarly, only half of respondents reported having access to affordable quality produce in their neighborhood.

- Only one-fifth of respondents rated the community’s financial health as “Good” or better. Almost 40% of respondents reported that they were either “Unsure” or “Very Unsure” of what their next month’s income would be each month. Nearly three quarters of all respondents indicated that there were not adequate job opportunities for residents of their neighborhood.

### Key Findings

- **Incarceration Rates:**
  - 1,698 people per 100,000 age 16 and older are incarcerated in jails in Brownsville and 1,065 are incarcerated in jails in East New York. The NYC average is 425.
  - (Source: NYCDOHMH Community Health Profiles, 2018)

- **Unemployment Rates:**
  - 14% of those 16 and older are unemployed in Brownsville and 10% are unemployed in East New York. The NYC average is 9%.
  - (Source: NYCDOHMH Community Health Profiles, 2018)

- **Poverty Rates:**
  - 28% of Brownsville residents are living in poverty and 30% are living in poverty in East New York. The NYC average is 20%.
  - (Source: NYCDOHMH Community Health Profiles, 2018)

**Workforce Strategy**

- Redirect healthcare supply chain dollars into the local economy
- Invest in deregulation of medical cannabis for community benefit
- Expand job creation for public health and health care workers

Are you ready to demand more jobs & economic opportunities?
Residents in Brownsville are more than twice as likely to die prematurely—before age 65—than the NYC average. In East New York, residents are 1.5 times more likely to die before age 65.

(Source: NYCDOHMH Community Health Profiles, 2018)

Average life expectancy in Brownsville is 75.1 years. In East New York life it is 78.6 years. The NYC average is 81.2 years. Brownsville’s average is 6.1 years below the NYC average.

(Source: NYCDOHMH Community Health Profiles, 2018)

We also learned from the Participatory Action Research effort that health is complex in nature, and a systems-change approach rooted in cultural values and a racial equity lens is needed to meaningfully address health inequities and be better positioned to “Build Community Health and Build Community Wealth.”

Above all, the PAR study shows us where and how we can take action. Based on the findings, the East Brooklyn Call-to-Action team has identified four areas where attention and resources are most needed.

**FOOD AND FITNESS**

Neighborhoods with easy access to healthy food and opportunities for physical activity

**HEALTH & HOUSING**

Homes that are truly affordable and neighborhoods where we can live without fear of displacement

**PREMATURE MORTALITY**

Neighborhoods that are healthy, safe and affirm black and brown lives

**WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

Job security and equitable wages

We need your input so that we can collectively decide where all of us should focus our efforts. On the following pages are some facts to provide you with more information about each of these areas as well as some ideas about how exactly they can be addressed. We hope that you will review them and then let us know where YOU think is most important place to begin.
### Food & Fitness

There are 15 bodegas for every one grocery store in Brownsville, and 13 bodegas for every one grocery store in East New York. (Source: NYCDOHMH Community Health Profiles, 2018)

Nearly 50% reported exercising more than 3 times per week. For many respondents, walking around the neighborhood was their major source of physical activity. (Source: NYCDOHMH Community Health Profiles, 2018)

Food insecurity in East Brooklyn is among the highest in NYC; research estimates that the average ‘Meal Gap’, or the “number of missing meals that result from insufficient household resources to purchase food,” is 6.8 million/year in East Brooklyn. (Source: Stampas et al. 2016)

### Health & Housing

71% of renter-occupied homes in Brownsville, and 62% of homes in East New York, have maintenance defects (water leaks, cracks and holes, inadequate heat, mice or rats, peeling paint). The NYC average is 56%. (Source: NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, 2014)

57% of households in Brownsville, and 52% of households in East New York pay more than 30% of their income on rent. The NYC average is 51%. (Source: NYCDOHMH Community Health Profiles, 2018)

Evictions in East Brooklyn are among the highest in NYC, with an average of 442 evictions per year, more than 15 times higher than the rates in more affluent neighborhoods like Park Slope. (Source: Waters, Thomas J and Mironova, Oksana. Addressing the Eviction Epidemic: The Right to Counsel in New York City. September 28, 2017)

### How do I get better quality food & exercise opportunities?

- Expand access to healthy, locally grown food
- Increase access to fitness programs and to gender-specific fitness activities
- Expand job opportunities for adults in fitness, especially older youth and formerly incarcerated people

### Will I be able to live here in 5 years?

- Identify practices and policies to keep housing affordable
- Engage community members in plans for new developments to be built on hospital property
- Expand programs and services that address unhealthy housing conditions
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  - Neighborhoods with easy access to healthy food and opportunities for physical activity

- **HEALTH & HOUSING**
  - Homes that are truly affordable and neighborhoods where we can live without fear of displacement

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  - Neighborhoods that are healthy, safe and affirm black and brown lives

- **WORKFORCE STRATEGY**
  - Job security and equitable wages

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