

Nonprofit formed to follow DSRIP garners grants to tackle social, economic disparities in Central Brooklyn

The nonprofit Brooklyn Communities Collaborative will use \$300,000 in new grants to expand its programs that fight social and economic disparities in Central Brooklyn.

Funding from the Altman Foundation and the New York Community Trust will support adding key staff and growing the reach of its programs, BCC said Monday. The work is especially important as Covid-19 rates spike in parts of the borough that have already suffered health and economic devastation in recent months.

"The pandemic has exposed what we all knew on some level," said Shari Suchoff, BCC's executive director. "But it's really brought it to the forefront, and shown how big a problem it is. It's all intertwined."

The aim of BCC is to establish concrete ways to address social and economic disparities that affect overall health, Suchoff said. Social and economic disparities have driven long-standing health inequities, BCC said, and those have been brought to even greater light during the pandemic, which has disproportionately affected communities of color.

"The health and economic turmoil of the last six months have emphasized the importance of addressing historic inequities," Rachael Pine of the Altman Foundation said in a statement.

Irfan Hasan of the New York Community Trust echoed that sentiment. "Together, we have the resources to make a difference," he said.

Programs of focus include the Health Enterprise Hub, a health care workforce and procurement system, and the Homes for Health initiative, which focuses on the development and improvement of stable housing in Brownsville and East New York, among other areas.

Other programs that will be expanded are Caring Communities, which provides care management for high-need patients ineligible for such services under Medicaid, and the Strong Communities Fund, which is designed to support and strengthen community-based organizations in Brooklyn.

BCC was formed last year to continue the work started under Community Care of Brooklyn, the Maimonides Medical Center-led performing provider system under the state Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment program for Medicaid redesign.

The nonprofit plans to continue leveraging the economic resources of anchor institutions, such as Maimonides, the City University of New York and One Brooklyn Health System, as well as community resources to address the economic factors that affect social determinants of health. Since the start of work under DSRIP, BCC's anchor institutions and community-based partners have helped to connect 80,000 patients with complex needs to care management services, make available 30,000 pounds of fresh produce annually in Central Brooklyn and develop 3,400 housing units.