



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 969

Resolution calling upon New York City's Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) to set notification guidelines for all public hospitals, and in particular, the Jacobi Medical Center, when informing patients of Pap test results.

By Council Members Baez, Barron, Brewer, Clarke, Comrie, Fidler, Foster, Gerson, Gonzalez, Jackson, James, Koppell, Liu, Nelson, Palma, Perkins, Seabrook and Weprin

Whereas, Pap tests are routine cancer screening tests that detect early abnormal cell changes in the cervix; and

Whereas, According to the National Cervical Cancer Coalition, cervical cancer is preventable and curable if detected early; and

Whereas, Many organizations, including the American Cancer Society, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Medical Association, recommend that Pap tests be conducted annually for women under 30 and every 2-3 years for women over 30 who have had 3 consecutive Pap tests with normal results; and

Whereas, According to a *New York Times* article dated May 19, 2005, Jacobi Medical Center, a public hospital under the direction of HHC, has performed nearly 20,000 Pap tests since December 2003, with 5,207 tests showing abnormalities; and

Whereas, On May 17, 2005, HHC announced that Jacobi Medical Center had failed to give 307 women Pap test results, which such results were considered abnormal; and

Whereas, According to a *Newsday* article dated May 18, 2005, of those 307 women who did not receive the results of their test, 30 were considered at an elevated risk for cervical cancer; and

Whereas, The notification failure was only identified after a patient complained about the delay in

receiving her results, which initiated an emergency review of over 19,000 Pap tests that were conducted at Jacobi Medical Center over the past sixteen months; and

Whereas, According to an HHC press release dated May 17, 2005, the problem was traced to a notification practice change that began in December 2003, which gave the responsibility of notifying patients of their test results to a single administrative clerk; and

Whereas, According to the *New York Times* article mentioned above, the notification process also lacked oversight, and HHC has suspended the administrative clerk, as well as several hospital officials, including the Executive Director of Jacobi Medical Center; and

Whereas, Jacobi Medical Center has changed its notification process with respect to abnormal Pap test results, increasing both documentation and oversight by implementing a daily log that two clerks will use to inform patients of results, as well as requiring a third employee to review the records again to ensure no test was overlooked; and

Whereas, HHC has also stated that hospital officials will begin making unannounced spot checks at public hospitals to ensure that women are being informed of their Pap test results; and

Whereas, While corrective measures have been taken to improve Jacobi Medical Center's notification process, HHC does not have set guidelines for notifying patients about Pap test results, and instead allows public hospitals to adopt their own procedures; and

Whereas, Establishing standard guidelines could increase efficiency and effectiveness at all public hospitals, decreasing the chances of future notification errors; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon upon New York City's Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) to set notification guidelines for all public hospitals, and in particular, the Jacobi Medical Center, when informing patients of Pap test results.

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