

June 9, 2004

Commissioner Edwin Méndez-Santiago  
Dept. for the Aging  
2 Lafayette Street, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Meals on Wheels**

Dear Commissioner Méndez-Santiago:

At its May 11, 2004 meeting, Manhattan Community Board No. 4's Housing, Health and Human Services Committee reviewed the plan for the pilot program to restructure home-delivered meals to the elderly. Our Board concurs with other community board's opposition to this experiment due to the following reasons:

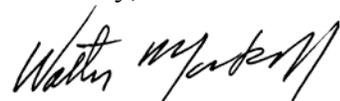
It is not clear how the consolidation of the services would improve or enhance home delivery service. It is strongly felt that a result of lowering the cost of these meals could also have a deleterious impact on nutrition content as well as delectability of the meals.

One should not minimize the importance of the brief daily human contacts which currently occur but will cease with delivery of multiple meals. Also, it is important that consideration be given to assessing which elderly clients are competent to properly prepare and self-administer these meals.

Homebound elderly persons constantly confront many obstacles in their efforts to remain self-sufficient and autonomous in their own homes. Dietary matters play a large role in the maintenance of optimum physical and psychological functioning.

These are some of the concerns strongly felt by our Board. While we agree that cost savings is always an important objective, we question the wisdom of imposing these objectives by reducing vital services to a class of our most valuable and most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,



Walter Mankoff  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board No. 4

Janice McGuire  
Chair  
Housing, Health & Human Services Committee

cc: Local elected officials