

NEW YORK POST

NEW YORK'S 'POOR' HEALTH

By FRANKIE EDOZIEN

September 28, 2007 -- Low-income New Yorkers have more cases of hospitalization and death from severe diseases than their wealthier neighbors, an analysis of health trends in the Big Apple by City Comptroller Bill Thompson concludes.

Thompson examined a report that looked at heart disease, cancer, diabetes, asthma and infant mortality over a 15-year period and found that in poorer neighborhoods, hospitalizations at later stages of illness were high, and that such health disparities are rising.

"While in many neighborhoods people are getting healthier, in other neighborhoods, the poor are suffering; they are getting sicker," said Thompson, a potential mayoral candidate in 2009.

From 1990-2005, diabetes hospitalizations increased 82.9 percent, but at that time, five neighborhoods - Hunts Point, Highbridge, Tremont and Fordham in The Bronx, along with East Harlem in Manhattan, saw hospitalization rates double.

Heart-disease hospitalizations grew from 86,747 in 1995 to 108,440 in 2005. The largest increases in hospitalization were in East New York, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights and Flatbush, all in Brooklyn.

Cancer hospitalizations dropped around the city, except in Hunts Point and East New York. Over those years, only slight decreases were seen in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Central Harlem.

Thompson said some neighborhoods where residents don't have access to screenings keep them from getting regular treatment that could stave off hospitalizations.

"If you live in a poor neighborhood, there's a good chance that it won't get caught until later - that you won't be in for a regular check-up, and things that might have been caught won't be," he said.

Thompson is urging drugstores to partner with the city's Health & Hospitals Corp. to open clinics on their premises in low-income neighborhoods.

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