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## **City Aging Department in need of reform before changing policy**

Thursday, June 5, 2008 2:23 PM EDT

A letter to city Department for the Aging Commissioner Edwin Mendez-Santiago:

Thank you for responding to my letter concerning the city Department for the Aging's plans to restructure how the city delivers elderly services. Your goals of making seniors healthy and ensuring that each gets needed services are laudable.

But the implementation plan guarantees too many seniors will not access needed services. Many will not be reached under the proposed models. The changes will affect seniors and their families, neighbors and friends. The Queens Civic Congress calls on the DFTA and state and city officials to delay the proposed RFPS on senior centers and Meals on Wheels. Queens should not suffer from changes that make no sense.

You seemed to ignore my point that "lack of cultural and ethnic sensitivity could deter participation in the program when meals provide a crucial connection to isolated seniors who otherwise may receive no social services which they may need (and qualify for)."

Critical comments by the QCC and Community Board 8 fail to appear on the DFTA Web site discussion of its concept papers. This suggests a DFTA afraid to expose the truth, that saving pennies fails to meet our seniors' and city's needs. The DFTA needs to hear from and heed the larger community. Communication must be consistent with clear indicators of the interest and concerns of our older community, seniors' families, civic groups, community boards and officials.

I write not just from a civic perspective, but as a board member with over two decades of experience leading senior agencies in my home borough. The DFTA's miscalculations in case management contracts, which imposed higher caseloads on under-resourced senior providers, hints at the chaos New Yorkers must endure if the DFTA's plans proceed without reforms.

The QCC expects city officials to use the budget process to stop the DFTA. It also supports pending state legislation, A.10470, and recently reached out to Queens state senators to move this initiative to make the DFTA take stock and proceed with care.

Corey Bearak  
President  
Queens Civic Congress  
Flushing

See the original letter to DFTA [here](#).