



April 28, 2023

Road Map Bulletin: Connecting Underserved Communities with Care Through the Selikoff Centers for Occupational Health

Happy Friday, Mount Sinai Community –

Breaking down silos and building strong relationships is an integral part of our work to provide equitable health care services. As we've mentioned previously, creating partnerships with community organizations and other health care providers beyond the walls of the hospital system is key to reaching those most in need of care and building trust among the populations we serve. Today, as we observe [Workers' Memorial Day](#), and in line with our work on [Road Map Strategy 3](#), we're taking a closer look at how Mount Sinai employees are working to achieve this goal.

The [Mount Sinai Selikoff Centers for Occupational Health](#), which provide no-cost, confidential medical evaluation and support services to keep workers healthy and workplaces safe, are focused on fighting disparities in access to care. We spoke with **Alyssa Gale, Director of the Department of Health Education**, and **Agata Bednarska and Milena Kachar, Program Managers for the Selikoff Centers for Occupational Health**, who are working at the forefront of this effort, leveraging existing health system resources, experience, and expertise to expand the Centers' ability to serve high-risk working populations that are less likely to seek care.

The key to this initiative is to first identify the barriers—including a lack of awareness about legal rights and protections and access to New York State Workers' Compensation and other benefits—that prevent many New Yorkers from getting the care they need.



Alyssa Gale

“Immediately we considered groups who are more marginalized in our society, including **undocumented immigrant workers**, who are not always being adequately reached or adequately served. Barriers to care can often be connected to systemic oppression and the rhetoric of fear and intimidation that’s part of our political discourse. Additionally, employer messaging may further suggest that workers are at risk of retribution, deportation, and wage theft if they seek the care,

services, and protections to which they are in fact legally entitled,” said **Alyssa**. “This sort of purposeful disenfranchisement is often by design. So, we are focused on ensuring everyone has the information and support needed to get workers connected with the Selikoff Centers.”

This starts with promoting awareness of the field of occupational medicine and the legal protections that exist for workers—then encouraging Mount Sinai providers, community organizations, and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) to refer anyone who may have suffered a work-related injury or illness to the Selikoff Centers for evaluation.



Milena Kachar



Agata Bednarska

Agata told us, “We’re working on strengthening preexisting partnerships and expanding our reach to providers and departments that we should have stronger partnerships with.” She added, “At the end of the day, we want to make sure that whatever a patient’s first

point of entry to care is—be it Mount Sinai’s Department of Emergency Medicine or a FQHC, where a large portion of uninsured New Yorkers receive care—they’re made aware of our services as soon as possible.”

In addition to evaluating, diagnosing, and treating occupational diseases and injuries, Selikoff staff also evaluate the work conditions of patients to determine whether other co-workers may be at risk, help them navigate the often complex New York State Workers’ Compensation benefit system, and suggest measures to improve work environments and establish workplace interventions that can prevent occupational diseases.

This effort is just one way that we are working to meet patients where they are and further build trust so that the most vulnerable communities know they can come to Mount Sinai for their health care needs. This week, as we remember workers killed, injured, or made ill on the job, and commemorate the struggles and gains made by workers and the labor movement during [May Day](#) and [Labor Day](#) observances, we reaffirm our commitment to promoting strong safety and health protections for our patients—and all New Yorkers.

To suggest a topic, highlight a coworker, or provide feedback on the Bulletins, send us an email at RoadMap@mountsinai.org.

All the best,

Angela and Shawn

Join Us for Upcoming Events

Chats for Change: The Gender Binary & Race — Chats for Change is a production of the Icahn School of Medicine's Racism and Bias Initiative. There is a direct connection between Gender Binary and White Supremacy, and the racialized construction of gender often goes unaddressed. Where did Gender Binary come from? How has it changed over time and place? How is our understanding of gender influenced by race and racism? And what does it mean to create a more gender-inclusive world? Join us on **May 2, 2023, from noon -1 pm** as we think beyond a binary built on Whiteness and expand our understanding of ways of being. [Register on Zoom.](#)

Center for Asian Equity and Professional Development Town Hall — The Center for Asian Equity and Professional Development (CAEPD) Education and Research Committee would like to invite all Asian and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) faculty, staff, and students, and their allies to an interactive Town Hall on **Thursday, May 18, 2023, from 6-7 pm**. We will discuss taking steps to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Mount Sinai Health System. Advance registration is [required](#) for this in-person/virtual, hybrid event. For more details, visit [Mount Sinai Daily](#).

[Road Map for Action](#)

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