



Children's Health Fund

From: **The Children's Health Fund**

Contact: Rebecca Hut 212-535-2163/cell 917-613-2089 RHut@chfund.org
Johanna Flattery 212-981-5228/cell 917-699-4374 Johanna_Flattery@dkcnews.com
Caitlin O'Neill 212-981-5275 / cell 646-594-5817 Caitlin_o'neill@dkcnews.com

CHILDREN'S HEALTH FUND TO EXPAND MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN NEW YORK CITY

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ARE SLIPPING INTO POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS IN RECORD NUMBERS DUE TO RECESSION

***Congressman Jose Serrano, The Honorable David N. Dinkins and
Montefiore Medical Center President & CEO, Dr. Steven M. Safyer to join
CHF President & Co-founder Dr. Irwin Redlener
for Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony***

SOUTH BRONX, NY (June 22, 2009) – The **Children's Health Fund** (CHF), a national New York-based organization that advocates for and develops programs that provide clinical care to disadvantaged and medically underserved children, and Montefiore Medical Center today held a Ribbon-Cutting ceremony for the opening of their New York Flagship Program headquarters at 853 Longwood Avenue in the South Bronx.

The recession is causing a record number of families in New York City to slip into poverty and homelessness. CHF's New York Flagship Program expansion will help meet this growing need. According to a January 2009 report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, family homelessness is increasing nationwide at record rates. In New York City, the number of families entering the homeless system increased by 40% from July to November 2008. **Forty percent (14,642) of the nearly 35,000 people currently in a City shelter today are children; (a 16.5% increase compared to three years ago (2006).**

"Kids can't wait for the economy to get better to get the health care they need. In fact, delaying needed health care for a year can mean a lifetime of consequences - and that is why we're expanding capacity in a time where most non-profits are cutting back," **Dr. Irwin Redlener, President of CHF** said. "Unemployment and reductions in state funding are causing resources for those in need to decrease, while simultaneously many additional children and families are falling into poverty and are in even greater need."

Dr. Redlener, continued, "By establishing our New York Flagship Program headquarters in the South Bronx and creating 60 new local jobs, we are pleased to bring economic development along with increased health care capacity to one of the City's poorest communities."

For the past 19 years, Montefiore Medical Center and the Children's Health Fund have worked together to fulfill a shared mission to increase access to care for homeless and vulnerable children

and families in the Bronx community,” **Dr. Steven M. Safyer, President & CEO Montefiore Medical Center** said. “We are pleased to continue this valuable partnership with the expansion of services to even more people in need, especially during these trying times.”

The Children’s Health Fund’s New York Flagship Program in affiliation with Montefiore Medical Center, includes The New York Children’s Health Project’s homeless health care program as well as the South Bronx Health Center for Children and Families, a neighborhood health center that has been an anchor in the community since 1993. The new facility will serve as the program’s headquarters.

The New York Children’s Health Project’s (NYCHP or Project) homeless health care program has provided comprehensive continuous health care via mobile medical clinics (MMC), specially designed pediatric offices on wheels complete with two exam rooms, a nurse’s station, waiting area, and electronic health record work stations, since the program began in 1987. The program provides care to New York City’s most vulnerable families, including homeless children, survivors of domestic violence, and street youth. The mobile team’s outreach to 14 sites in the City will continue and be enhanced by this new facility. In addition to primary clinical care, the Project provides mental health services, case management, nutritional counseling, and other support services, ***regardless of the patient’s ability to pay.*** **Fully operational; medical, mental health, and nutrition services will be available 5 days a week at this fixed site clinic amounting to up to 2,400 additional annual patient encounters. This is an 20 percent increase.**

In addition to being within a short distance of most of the shelters currently served by NYCHP’s mobile medical clinics, the full-time fixed-site clinic will be accessible to families at several smaller homeless shelters and domestic safe houses. Additionally, since CHF’s South Bronx Health Center for Children and Families (SBHCCF) is just a block away, homeless families can be referred there for services – such as prenatal or HIV/AIDS care. Homeless patients who find permanent residence in the South Bronx can also be referred to the SBHCCF as their new primary care site. And, because the clinic is housed at the hub site for CHF’s Flagship Programs, it will be co-located with The Starr Center for Preventive Health and Special Initiatives, which develops and evaluates effective practices for addressing the most pressing health care issues facing children in New York City and America, including asthma and pediatric obesity.

Current data by the Children’s Health Fund of their New York Program populations shows that even in times of economic stability, homeless children have a higher susceptibility to certain chronic health risks, such as asthma, obesity, and depression than children living in poverty. According to a 2007 study: asthma prevalence among the New York program’s pediatric population was 32% compared to a reported 10% prevalence rate for children in poverty. Patients between the ages of 6-11, 32% were obese compared to a national average of 19% and from 1-19 years old, 30% had a developmental or psychiatric diagnosis.

The Children’s Health Fund’s New York Flagship Program is supported in part by the following Leadership Donors: The Carson Family Charitable Trust, Deerfield Foundation, The Starr Foundation, GlaxoSmithKline, Robin Hood Foundation, and Starr International Foundation.

Children’s Health Fund (CHF)

Founded in 1987 by pediatrician/advocate Irwin Redlener, MD, and singer/songwriter Paul Simon, the Children’s Health Fund (CHF) works nationally to advocate on behalf of all children and to develop health care programs for the most medically under-served population- homeless and disadvantaged children. CHF’s 22 pediatric programs and 2 affiliates in 15 states and DC have provided essential primary care services in more than 1.8 million patient visits via mobile

medical clinics. For more information about CHF and the Kids Can't Wait campaign visit:
www.childrenshealthfund.org

The Children's Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM)

Opened in 2001, Montefiore's state-of-the-art children's hospital links the expertise and technology of a world-class hospital - staffed by leading specialists in all areas of pediatrics - with an extensive network of community-based primary care. The Children's Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM) is world renowned for its innovative approaches to highly complex medical challenges.

For more information about CHAM please visit www.MonteKids.org.

CHF's New York Flagship Program

CHF'S New York Flagship Program is affiliated with The Children's Hospital at Montefiore and operated under the auspices of its Community Pediatric Programs. Through the New York Children's Health Project (NYCHP), the South Bronx Health Center for Children and Families (SBHCCF) and The Starr Center for Preventive Health and Special Initiatives, excellence in health care is delivered to NYC's most vulnerable children and their families.

Founded in 1987, NYCHP provides health care to homeless children and families at 14 sites throughout New York City via mobile medical clinics. The SBHCCF, a community health center, has provided comprehensive medical and mental health services since 1993. The Starr Center for Preventive Health and Special Initiatives supports the mission of CHF's NY Flagship Program by developing, implementing, and evaluating innovative solutions to chronic medical conditions and health disparities.

###