CHCANY'S CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION EFFORTS RECOGNIZED BY ACTING SURGEON GENERAL

New York – The Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANY'S) was recently recognized by Acting Surgeon General Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H. with a Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future Champion Award for its innovative work on preventing childhood obesity. It is the first time this award has been given in New York State. The “Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future” initiative focuses on recognizing the efforts of communities to address childhood overweight and obesity issues by helping kids stay active, encouraging healthy eating habits, and promoting healthy choices.

CHCANY'S first introduced the NIH national We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children’s Activity and Nutrition) Program to community health care providers, activists, parents and elected officials working together to combat childhood obesity last June. The We Can! Program helps children ages 8-13 stay at a healthy weight through improving food choices, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time. The program offers flexible, turn-key resources complete with partnership ideas and outreach opportunities to unite community organizations.

Earlier this year, CHCANY'S held a New York City Obesity Prevention and Management Consortium involving eight community health centers throughout New York City to develop community-wide strategies for reducing childhood obesity. Recognizing that childhood obesity is fast becoming epidemic among the underserved, participating in the We Can! Program was the logical next step for CHCANY'S. Funding for CHCANY’S program came from New York City Councilmember and Health Committee Chair Joel Rivera.

“Councilman Rivera has been our partner in the battle against childhood obesity, grassroots education is key,” said CHCANY'S CEO Elizabeth Swain. “We need to acknowledge him as well as the eight NYC community health centers which are working so diligently on implementing this training.”

The eight community health centers are Urban Health Plan, William F. Ryan Community Health Center, Joseph B. Addabbo Family Health Center, Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, Montefiore Family Health Center, Montefiore Comprehensive Family Care Center, Sunset Park Family Health Center Network, Betances Health Center, and the East Harlem Health Center.

“In just two years, this city has gained 10 million pounds,” said Joel Rivera, City Council Majority Leader and Chair of the Health Committee. “When we look around, we see a lot of that weight is being carried by our kids. Bringing the We Can! message to New York means fighting the diabetes and hypertension our children will be saddled with if they don’t start eating better and exercising today. CHCANY’S and CMOM are to be commended for their commitment to making New York a healthier place to live.”
“Programs like *We Can!* go a long way toward providing the tools our at-risk population needs to ensure that their children maintain a healthy weight,” said Swain. “We are continuing to put substantial resources toward that goal and we are pleased that Surgeon General Galson is acknowledging those efforts.”

Galson presented the award on Friday, October 24th at the Children’s Museum of Manhattan, one of CHCANYS’ partners in this effort. At the event, Galson said “The obesity epidemic is real and its implications, especially for young people, are profound. By educating individuals and families about their good nutrition, the value of healthy choices, the importance of preventive medicine, medical screening, the delay and, ultimately, prevention of overweight and obesity is possible.”

--30--

*The Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS) organizes, educates, and advocates on behalf of more than 50 federally qualified community health centers located throughout New York State. Community health centers provide high quality, affordable and accessible primary and preventive health care for more than 1 million New Yorkers at over 425 sites. For more information on CHCANYS or community health care in New York, go online to www.chcanys.org or call (212) 279.9686.*