



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HEALTH DEPARTMENT’S COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER PROGRAM LEADS TO HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS AMONG HARLEM RESIDENTS

*Community health workers have engaged more than 3,000 Harlem residents
in over 600 wellness activities*

*After the first six months, over 90 percent of the health coaching participants had
made progress in achieving their health goals*

March 21, 2018 –The Health Department’s Center for Health Equity today announced that the [Harlem Health Advocacy Partners](#) (HHAP) program has improved health outcomes for Harlem residents. HHAP, a community health worker program launched in 2015, connects people living in five NYCHA developments in East and Central Harlem to neighborhood resources that can help them manage their current health conditions, enroll and save on health insurance, and get involved with community organizing. The program has engaged more than 3,000 individuals in over 600 wellness activities – including walking groups, health screenings, and wellness workshops – and from 2016 to 2017, its 12 community health workers conducted some 2,500 one-on-one health coaching visits with 678 HHAP participants. Data show that after six months, over 90 percent of HHAP health coaching participants made progress in achieving their health goals. HHAP has also helped over 900 participants with 2,000 health insurance-related issues. Health advocates saved Harlem residents \$200,000 in health care spending or out-of-pocket costs due to problems such as billing errors, coverage disputes or expensive drug copays. To read stories about HHAP participants and community health workers, follow the #NeighborhoodVoicesNYC series on the Health Department’s social media channels.



“I’ve learned a lot about what is good for me, like eating fruits and vegetables. Now I get more exercise. I belong to a senior swimming club. I feel good knowing that I’m taking care of myself,” Millie, former HHAP participant. Follow along with #NeighborhoodVoicesNYC

“Community health is a critical way for us to support wellness at the individual level,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. “Harlem Health Advocacy Partners promotes individual health by connecting participants with health coaching, social services and community resources. But the program doesn’t stop there. HHAP also provides tools to help East and Central Harlem residents advocate for the change they want to see in their communities.”

HHAP is a partnership between the Center for Health Equity’s Harlem Neighborhood Health Action Centers and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), Community Service Society of New York (CSS) and NYU-CUNY Prevention Research Center. The program provides a wide variety of resources, including: asthma management; diabetes or hypertension control; obtaining wheelchairs, walkers and monitoring devices; smoking cessation; escorted doctor visits; SNAP or other supplemental food benefits;

nutrition and cooking classes; walking groups; services for seniors; help living with HIV/AIDS; legal assistance; and art therapy. In addition, its Community Activation Team has organized 11 workshops to train community residents in community advocacy. The HHAP Community Activation Team also raised \$3,000 through crowdfunding to provide community organizer training to members. To learn more about HHAP, visit nyc.gov/health.

“Harlem has a rich history of community organizing and activism,” said **Dr. Aletha Maybank, Deputy Commissioner and Director of the Center for Health Equity**. “Through HHAP’s Community Activation Teams and our #NeighborhoodVoicesNYC campaign, we are creating opportunities to amplify voices and lived experiences of our residents.”

“The new #NeighborhoodVoicesNYC campaign will create further awareness of critical neighborhood health resources and services offered by the HHAP program and also help reduce health disparities that continue to affect vulnerable communities in Harlem,” said **NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye**.

“CSS is proud to be a partner on this important community initiative. Advancing and improving health equity requires us to directly focus on communities experiencing the greatest disparities through addressing social and environmental determinants,” said **David R. Jones, President and CEO of Community Service Society**.”

"As the evaluation partner to the HHAP Project, the NYU-CUNY Prevention Research Center at NYU School of Medicine is pleased to provide ongoing population health and community engagement expertise to improve and deepen the project's impact in the community. We are continually inspired by the vision of the project and the commitment of its staff." said **Lorna E. Thorpe, Professor of Population Health and Director of the Division of Epidemiology at NYU School of Medicine**.

“Healthy communities are thriving communities! I commend the NYC Health Department on the success of the Harlem Health Advocacy Partners (HHAP) program and its efforts to help improve the lives and wellbeing of residents in East and Central Harlem,” said **Representative Adriano Espaillat**. “Health disparities have a disproportionate impact on minority communities and the HHAP program does tremendous work to help our neighbors, friends, and families gain access and understanding of the resources available to them within the community to help keep them healthy and achieve health equity.”

“Bringing services into the community and engaging with people where they are is always the right move,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “Access is a key challenge not just for healthcare but for social services, legal services, and a host of other essentials that help working families. Bringing professionals into the community to help people get the care and services they need bridges the gap and improves lives.”

“Since HHAP came to East Harlem, our NYCHA residents are getting connected to health and wellness programs that are helping residents make better decisions about their health and helping neighbors become advocates for their communities. HHAP is helping to reduce health disparities and I look forward to seeing the program’s continued success,” said **Assembly Member Robert J. Rodríguez**.

About the Center for Health Equity

The Center for Health Equity works toward a fair and healthy New York where all residents—regardless of their zip code—have the opportunity to lead their healthiest lives. As a division of the New York City Health Department, the Center for Health Equity strengthens the agency’s goal to eliminate health inequities, or unjust differences in health outcomes, for residents in neighborhoods impacted by racism and long-term disinvestment by organizations and institutions. The Center uses data and storytelling to

highlight injustices, influencing policy, systems, and environmental change, and implementing neighborhood-based strategies to foster health.

The Center for Health Equity's Neighborhood Health Action Centers work to address the root causes of health inequities in East Harlem, the South Bronx, and Central and East Brooklyn. The Action Centers offer coordinated health and social services, as well as community programs under one roof. They also provide hubs for people to become involved in efforts to improve the health of their neighborhoods. Follow the Center for Health Equity on social media using #NYCHealthEquity.

About New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)

NYCHA's mission is to increase opportunities for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers by providing safe, affordable housing and facilitating access to social and community services. More than 400,000 New Yorkers reside in NYCHA's 326 public housing developments around the five boroughs, and another 235,000 receive subsidized rental assistance in private homes through the NYCHA-administered Section 8 Leased Housing Program. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/nycha and for regular updates on NYCHA news and services, connect with us via www.facebook.com/NYCHA and www.twitter.com/NYCHA.

About Community Service Society of New York (CSS)

The Community Service Society of New York (CSS) is an informed, independent, and unwavering voice for positive action on behalf of more than 3 million low-income New Yorkers. CSS draws on a 170-year history of excellence in addressing the root causes of economic disparity through research, advocacy, litigation, and innovative program models that strengthen and benefit all New Yorkers.

About NYU-CUNY Prevention Research Center

Established in 2014, the NYU-CUNY Prevention Research Center (NYU-CUNY PRC) implements, evaluates, and disseminates community-clinical linkage interventions to reduce cardiovascular disease disparities in ethnically diverse NYC communities. The Center emphasizes collaborative research with multi-sector stakeholders and translation of research findings into sustainable and scalable policies and programs.

The NYU-CUNY PRC's core research focuses on community health workers who bridge the gap between underserved communities and clinical care, and includes [Project IMPACT \(Implementing Million Hearts for Provider and Community Transformation\)](#).

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