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Community Healthcare Network Significantly Increases Contraceptive Use among 12-19-Year-Olds

Results Lead to Award from the City Department of Health

(New York, NY) – Community Healthcare Network (CHN) implemented Best Practices outlined by the City Department of Health (DOH) and achieved a significant increase in the use of hormonal contraceptives, such as the pill or IUD, among adolescents ages 12-19. For their success, CHN received an award from DOH on June 1, 2011.

At CHN's Helen B. Atkinson center in Harlem, hormonal contraceptive use increased from 23 percent to 77 percent. At the Community League Center in Washington Heights, hormonal contraceptive use increased from 43 percent to 91 percent. According to the United Hospital Fund, these two neighborhoods have some of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the City.

According to the Department of Health, only 9 percent of adolescents city-wide say they use hormonal contraceptives. The problem, according to Health Commissioner Farley, is that "Nobody is really taught how to provide reproductive health services to adolescents."

DOH's Best Practices address the shortfalls in the healthcare system, including building staff capacity. Dr. Gale Blakley, CHN's Director of Women's Health Services, uses a litmus test to assess candidates for family planning positions: she asks them "So tell me, what do you think about sixteen-year-olds having sex?" The correct answer, according to Dr. Blakely, is a concern about preventing pregnancies and STDs. CHN also has a comprehensive orientation, training and support program for new family planning staff.

Dr. Blakley and Elizabeth Joglar, Director of the Community League Center, presented CHN's best practices at an awards event hosted by DOH. "We are thrilled to be recognized by DOH. As an organization with its roots in family planning and reproductive healthcare, we work hard every day to ensure our communities receive quality services and have full access to family planning services," said CHN's President and CEO Catherine Abate.

About CHN:

Community Healthcare Network (CHN) is a not-for-profit organization providing access to affordable, culturally-competent and comprehensive community-based primary care, mental health and social services for diverse populations in underserved communities throughout New York City. CHN serves more than 70,000 individuals a year who would otherwise have little or no access to critical health care. CHN is composed of nine health centers and one mobile health units. To learn more about CHN visit our website at www.chnny.org.

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