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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY WALK TEAM RECEIVES AWARD
FOR TOP FUNDRAISING EFFORT**

The Westchester County Walk Team will be receiving an award from the American Diabetes Association (ADA) for being one of the top fundraising teams at the ADA's annual *America's Walk for Diabetes* in White Plains in October.

The team, comprised of Westchester County employees and coordinated this year by the Westchester County Health Department, raised \$4,313 at the sponsored walk. The money will be used for diabetes research, advocacy and education.

Mary Reed, Director of the ADA's Westchester County Chapter, praised the Westchester County Walk Team's "fantastic job" in becoming one of the top fundraising teams at the event. Ms. Reed will be presenting the team with a plaque this week. The team and individual members will also be recognized at an ADA awards dinner in January.

"We are honored to have been able to raise this money for such an important cause, and we are proud of the dedication and enthusiasm of the Westchester County Walk Team," said Joshua Lipsman, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health for Westchester County and a participant in the walk. "Every 21 seconds someone in the U.S. is diagnosed with diabetes. It is now the sixth leading cause of death in Westchester and is also a primary cause of disability."

The *Walk for Diabetes* also was intended to promote public awareness of diabetes and the role that exercise and healthy diet can play in preventing and controlling diabetes.

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Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin - a hormone needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life. The cause of diabetes is uncertain but genetics appear to play a role, together with more controllable factors such as obesity and physical inactivity.

The disease affects an estimated 20 million American adults and children, or approximately seven percent of the population. Approximately one third of those persons are unaware that they have diabetes. In addition, the problem continues to grow, and it is predicted that one in three children born in the year 2000 will develop diabetes during their lifetimes.

Without adequate treatment, diabetes can lead to blindness, kidney disease and leg amputations. However, diabetes and its complications are often preventable. Making the effort to eat right and engage in physical activity every day can offer great protection against diabetes and other life-threatening chronic illnesses.

For more information, please call the Westchester County Health Department at (914) 813-5000 or visit the Health Department website at www.westchestergov.com/health.