

ANDREW J. SPANO, Westchester County Executive  
JOSHUA LIPSMAN, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health  
SUSAN TOLCHIN, Director of Communications

**CONTACT: Caren Halbfinger**

**(914) 813-5013  
(914) 813-5000 (After Hours)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 6, 2008**

**“IT’S MY HEALTHCARE” – Your Guide To Good Health  
Spano introduces new patient education campaign**

A trip to the doctor can be overwhelming, confusing and sometimes even nerve-racking. That’s why County Executive Andy Spano directed the Westchester County Health Department to team up with Westchester Medical Center and a group of more than 60 physicians, hospital and healthcare executives to create “It’s My Healthcare, an all-encompassing patient education initiative. Their year-long collaboration led to the introduction of “It’s My Healthcare” at the White Plains YWCA today.

More than 50 people attended the event.

Included in the educational materials that were presented and will be widely distributed to the public, is a 12-minute video that illustrates, through three different scenarios, how to get the most out of your health care. It shows how people interact with their doctors and why it’s so important to prepare for a doctor visit, bring your medications and records of recent hospital visits along.

“With all the confusing medical terminology nowadays, many people get flustered when they go to the doctor and usually remember the questions they wanted to ask after they leave the office,” said County Executive Andy Spano. “To get the best possible health care from the top-notch medical professionals we have in Westchester, everyone should bring to their next doctor’s visit the brochures, tips and check lists on the It’s My Healthcare website, in our video and brochures.”

Today’s presentation featured a 12-minute video produced by the county’s multimedia group that illustrates why it’s so important to prepare for your doctor visits ahead of time so that your doctor can help you make informed health care choices. It can be viewed at

<http://video.westchestergov.com:8080/asxgen/2008/medical.wmv>

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“Studies have shown that people who take an active role in their health care get better faster,” said Westchester County Health Commissioner Dr. Joshua Lipsman, who collaborated with leaders from the county’s medical community on this campaign. “That’s why dedicated physicians and hospital executives in Westchester felt it was critical to work with us to develop these resources. They need your help to give you the best possible care.”

Brochures and videos will be made available at many clinics and doctors’ offices throughout the county. The public can also download the tips, checklists and brochures by going to [www.westchestergov.com/itsmyhealthcare](http://www.westchestergov.com/itsmyhealthcare).

The Westchester County Health Department’s Division of Community Health also will take this presentation on the road to interested community groups and organizations and can provide brochures in Spanish and English. To schedule a presentation, call the Division of Community Health at (914) 813-5227.

In addition to the video presentation, there was also a public discussion led by several physicians who helped develop the materials.

The physicians were Dr. Janet Sullivan, the chief medical officer of the Hudson Health Plan; Dr. Kira Geraci-Ciardullo, a specialist in allergy, asthma and immunology with a Mamaroneck practice, who co-chairs the task force on Quality Medical Care for the Medical Society of the State of New York; and Dr. Abe Levy, medical director and chief quality officer for the Mount Kisco Medical Group.

“People prepare more for a trip to the supermarket than they do for a visit to their doctor,” said Dr. Janet Sullivan, the chief medical officer of the Hudson Health Plan, one of the largest Medicaid-managed health care plans in Westchester. “I hope this will drive home to patients that just as having a shopping list, coupons and a game plan can make for better grocery shopping, bringing a list of medications, symptoms and questions can lead to better understanding between patient and physician, and ultimately, to better health.”

“It can be so helpful for a patient to bring along a friend or family member to an appointment,” said Dr. Kira Geraci-Ciardullo, a specialist in allergy, asthma and immunology with a Mamaroneck practice, who

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co-chairs the task force on Quality Medical Care for the Medical Society of the State of New York. “Besides providing emotional support, your friend or relative can take notes and help you remember the advice your doctor gives you and the questions you want to ask. I hope everyone here will tell their friends and family members about this important campaign.”

“When patients come to see us about a medical condition, they have often talked to friends and family or done their own web search, and they may have found conflicting information from sources of varying degrees of reliability,” said Dr. Abe Levy, Medical Director and Chief Quality Officer of the Mount Kisco Medical Group. “It really helps us help them when they come to the office prepared for the visit. That way, they can leave our office knowing more about their condition, how to manage it, and will understand the treatment plan we develop together.”

Among those who helped develop this initiative were: Dr. Jeffrey Ambinder, President, Access Medical Group; Robert Amler, Dean, New York Medical College School of Public Health; Margaret Anecchino, Dr. Susan Beane, Renata Colon, Maura Bluestone and Carolyn Cocotas, Director of Community Health Initiatives, Affinity Healthplan, Inc.; Dr. Edward Anselm, Health Insurance Plan of New York; Anthony Bacchi, Magna Health; Dr. Robert Bernasek, Medical Director and John Federspiel, Hudson Valley Hospital Center; Thomas Boyajy, Horizon HealthCare of New York; Amy Callan, Hudson Health Plan; Dr. Nicholas DeRobertis, Medical Director, St. Joseph's Hospital; Edward Dinan, Lawrence Hospital Center; Dr. Wayne Eisman and Robert Glazer, ENT & Allergy Associates; Lindsay Farrell, President & CEO and Dr. Daren Wu, Open Door Family Medical Center, Ossining; Cheryl Fella, Assistant Vice President, Nursing, Dr. Mark Silberman and Ron Corti, Community Hospital at Dobbs Ferry; Dr. Jay Izes, Medical Director, and James Foy, President & CEO, St. John's Riverside; Dr. Renee Garrick, Medical Director, Westchester Medical Center; Dr. Michael Gewitz and Dr. Leonard Newman, Children and Women's Physicians of Westchester; Marcia Gordon, President & CEO, Business Council of Westchester; George Haskins and Dr. Paul Tucci, Medical Director, Mount Vernon Hospital; Dr. Kira Geraci-Ciardullo Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Specialist, Mamaroneck; Dr. Larry Kadish, Medical Director, White Plains Hospital Center; Anne Kauffman-Nolon, and Dr. Paul Kaye, Medical Director, Hudson River Healthcare, Inc.; Dr. Paul Khoury, White Plains Radiology Associates; Amy Knapp, United HealthCare of New York; Dr. Marla Koroly, Northern Westchester Hospital Center; Jennifer Kuttruf and Dr. Thomas Lester, Westchester Health Association; Dr. Abe Levy, Medical Director and Chief Quality Officer and Dr. Scott Hayworth, Mount Kisco Medical Group; Dr. Peter Liebert, Pediatric Surgeon, Mount Kisco and White Plains; Dr. Ronald Menzin, WellCare of New York, Inc.; Carole Morris, President & CEO, and Dr. Steven Levine, Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center; Dr. Marco Michelson and Mark Lane, Fidelis Care; William Mooney, Jr., President, Westchester County Association; Dr. Alan Muney and Dr. Terrence Fitzgerald, Oxford Health Plans; Dr. Barney Newman, Medical Director, Westchester Medical Group; Dr. Carl Richie, Community Choice Health Plan; Dr. Ira Salom, GHI HMO Select, Inc.; Jon Schandler, President & CEO, White Plains Hospital Center; Joel Seligman, Northern Westchester Hospital Center; Lois Steinberg, Westchester Program Director, Medicare Rights Center; Michael Israel, President and CEO, Westchester Medical Center; Dr. Janet Sullivan, Chief Medical Officer, Hudson Health Plan; Kim Opens, Director, Regulatory Affairs, ENT & Allergy Associates; Dr. Werner Roeder, Medical Director, Lawrence Hospital Center; Karen Romero, Affinity Health Plan, Inc.; Keith Safian, President & CEO, and Dr. Lawrence Faltz, Phelps Memorial Hospital Center; Kristin Sainato, Director, Quality Management, Fidelis Care; Dr. Simeon Schwartz, Dr. Barney Newman and Nancy Levesque, Westchester Medical Group; Stephan Sloan, Capital District Physicians Health Plan; John Spicer, President & CEO, Sound Shore Medical Center; Michael Spicer, President & CEO, and Dr. Nicholas DeRobertis, St. Joseph's Medical Center; Dr. Peter Stangel, Vice President, Medical Integration, Health Net of Northeast, Inc.; Dr. Michael Stocker, Empire Blue Cross & Blue Shield HMO; Dr. Alfred Tinger and Stuart Hayman, Westchester County Medical Society.

