



Henry Thompson, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer

For Immediate Release – October 24, 2012
Contact: Henry Thompson
Office: 718.924.2254

The Community Health Center is Expanding its Fight Against Cervical Cancer

The Community Health Center of Richmond is increasing its efforts to combat cervical cancer with the aid of a \$55,000 federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration.

CHCR will use the funding to develop comprehensive patient outreach, education and tracking to ensure that all female patients who need Pap smears receive them as part of their overall wellness care. Since 2009, CHCR has improved its Pap testing rates from about 35 percent of its female patients to more than 78 percent in 2011. CHCR expects to raise that rate to at least 90 percent with the new programs, says Chief Medical Officer Rosalinda Rosario-Lipka, D.O.

"We want to identify and reach out to our female patients who are not getting regular Pap smears and pelvic exams and enroll them in a program, so we make sure that they're offered this test," said Dr. Rosario-Lipka. "Pap smears save lives."

CHCR is developing a data-collection and tracking system that will inform primary care doctors when patients are due or past-due for a Pap test. CHCR will send reminders to these patients and also flag their charts, so that if they come into the center for routine appointments or ill visits, they can be offered Pap tests while they're in the doctor's office. CHCR also plans patient outreach and public information campaigns to raise awareness about cervical cancer prevention among residents of the North Shore of Staten Island.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that sexually active women have Pap tests every 1 to 3 years. During a Pap test, cells and mucus are gently scraped from the cervix and examined for evidence of changes that indicate pre-cancerous or cancerous conditions. The Pap test is considered one of the most reliable cancer screening tests available and enables doctors to identify and treat pre-cancerous conditions before cancer ever develops.

Before Pap tests, cervical cancer was one of the major causes of death among American women of childbearing age. Today, the death rate from cervical cancer is a low 2.4 per 100,000 women a year. That percentage, however, still represents an estimated 4,210 cancer deaths a year—most of which could be prevented by early detection.

Hispanic and African-American women have the highest rates of cervical cancer with a mortality rate of almost twice that of Asian and Anglo women. Lack of awareness and access to regular testing contributes to higher death rates. CHCR participates in programs that provide free or low-cost Pap smears for low-income women.

More information about the Community Health Center of Richmond is available on the Internet at www.chcrichmond.org.

###