



**Community Health Care Association  
of New York State**

*Defining New Directions*

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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## **COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS SEND OUT A FLEET OF MOBILE MEDICAL VANS TO SERVE AREAS HARDEST HIT BY HURRICANE SANDY**

NEW YORK, NY (November 8, 2012). In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, seven community health centers have dispatched 12 mobile medical and outreach vans to provide health care to communities in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island devastated by the storm. The first vans began delivering services on Monday, November 5, 2012. The health care services provided through the vans were available free to anyone who needs care.

The New York State Department of Health, New York City Mayor Bloomberg's Office, and the Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS) are jointly collaborating on the deployment of the vans. The health centers have committed to send the vans for as long as services are need.

"New York's health centers are always a vital source of primary care in our State and even more so in an emergency," said Elizabeth Swain, President and CEO of CHCANYS. "The mobile medical vans enabled health centers to get to these communities quickly and immediately start providing care."

### **STORIES FROM THE FIELD:**

Refuah Health Center had lost power at two of their health centers in Rockland County and one in Sullivan County, NY. They used their mobile medical vans to ensure that they were able to continue providing care to their patients and five shuttle buses to provide free transportation to the vans. Power at all of their sites was restored by 7:00 pm on Sunday, November 4, 2012. Ten minutes later, Chanie Sternberg, President and CEO of Refuah Health Center received a call from the New York State Department of Health asking her if Refuah would send one of their mobile medical vans to communities devastated by the storm. "I told them we would send three vans and by 5:00 am the next morning, two vans were on their way to Queens and one to Brooklyn," said Mrs. Sternberg. Refuah's staff and providers worked through the night to ensure that the vans were stocked with supplies and medicine and that the technology and communications systems were in place. "Of course, we would send vans," she added. "That's what health centers do and it's certainly what Refuah does."

Urban Health Plan also sent a mobile medical van to Queens and Brooklyn. “When we were asked by the State on Sunday to send a van, there was no question that we would dispatch it to those who needed care,” said Paloma Hernandez, President and CEO of Urban Health Plan. “We told them to send us wherever we are needed.” On Monday, Urban Health Plan’s van went to Far Rockaway in Queens and provided care to all residents who needed it. On Wednesday, their van was deployed to Red Hook in Brooklyn, another area hit hard by the storm. When the van arrived, they saw that Addabbo Family Health Center had been able to start serving patients in their center. On Thursday, Urban moved the van to another area in Red Hook that needed services. On both days, they worked closely with Addabbo to coordinate the delivery of care. “The new health care system is supposed to be about coordinating care for patients and we showed that we can do that together, even in an emergency,” Ms. Hernandez said.

All three of the Addabbo Family Health Center’s sites were severely damaged by the storm. Their health center in Red Hook sustained the most damage, with three feet of water covering their first floor. All their sites lost power and they are not sure when it will be restored. Dr. Peter Nelson, CEO of Addabbo, said that even though he expects a long recovery, there has been an outpouring of support. “We are so grateful to the Urban Health Plan and Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center and that they had mobile vans and were willing to share them.” Through FEMA, they received generators. “That has been a game changer,” Mr. Nelson said. “It means that we can probably open our headquarters on Monday.” Mr. Nelson also indicated that he has gotten calls and support from local and City officials, other health centers, Americare, and others. “I am extremely grateful to the New York Department of Health and to CHCANYS for coordinating that with them,” Mr. Nelson said. “I heard that our center is rising to the top of everyone’s list. We really can see that and in a tangible way.”

CHCANYS continues to work closely with health centers in areas directly impacted by the storm to assess damage and monitor emerging needs while collaborating with State, local, and federal partners to assure the availability of needed resources and supplies. Through on-the-ground outreach and communication, the CHCANYS Emergency Management Team is helping centers to mobilize immediate recovery efforts while assuring that strategies are in place for long-term stability.

#### **HEALTH CENTERS THAT DEPLOYED MOBILE VANS:**

- **Acacia Network, Inc.:** 1 mobile medical van and 1 outreach van  
<http://www.promesa.org>
- **Children’s Health Fund:** 2 mobile medical vans  
<http://www.childrenshealthfund.org>
- **Community Healthcare Network:** 1 mobile medical van  
<http://www.chnny.org>
- **Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center:** 1 mobile medical van  
<http://www.ghvfhc.org>
- **Refuah Health Center:** 3 vans mobile medical vans  
<http://www.refuahhealthcenter.com>
- **Urban Health Plan:** 1 mobile medical van

<http://www.urbanhealthplan.org>

- **William F. Ryan Community Health Network:** 2 outreach vans and 1 mobile medical van

<http://www.ryancenter.org>

**LOCATION OF VANS:**

The locations for the vans are updated daily and appear on New York City's website:

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/medical\\_vans.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/medical_vans.html)



Refuah Health Center at St. Francis de Sales, 129-16 Rockaway Beach Blvd., Queens – November 5, 2012

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### **About CHCANYS**

Founded 40 years ago, CHCANYS is New York State's Primary Care Association. CHCANYS' mission is to ensure that all New Yorkers, including those who are medically underserved, have continuous access to high-quality, community-based health care services, including a primary care home. To do this, CHCANYS serves as the voice of community health centers as leading providers of primary health care in New York State. CHCANYS works closely with the more than 60 federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) that operate approximately 600 sites across the state. These community health centers are not-for-profit, patient-centered medical homes located in medically underserved areas. They provide high quality, cost-effective primary health care to anyone seeking care, regardless of the patients' insurance status or ability to pay. Health centers serve 1.5 million New Yorkers annually and are central to New York's health care safety net. CHCANYS works to increase access to health care for all New Yorkers through a program of health policy leadership, regulatory reform, and grassroots advocacy and to support FQHCs with tools and information necessary to maintain and improve existing programs, strengthen core services, and build new programs. CHCANYS has a proven track record of addressing the needs of FQHCs by providing technical assistance and training that enables FQHCs to improve patient care and outcomes, strengthen their operations and finances, meet reporting obligations, and address regulatory changes. [www.chcanys.org](http://www.chcanys.org)