



PRESS RELEASE

Media Contact: Bob Li, George Arzt Communications, Inc.
C: 917-287-7089; e-mail: bob@gacnyc.com

NEW YORK STATE DOOMS DIABETES SUFFERERS TO AMPUTATIONS, DIALYSIS AND ALZHEIMERS BY CUTTING FUNDS FOR PROVEN PROGRAMS THAT HELP RESIDENTS LOWER BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS

AS STATE VOWS TO CUT MEDICAID COSTS, WHY WON'T IT FUND THE DIABETES SELF-MANAGEMENT PROGRAM THAT OFFICIALS KNOW WOULD SAVE THOUSANDS OF LIVES AND BILLIONS OF TAX DOLLARS?

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 14, 2023

Expressing outrage over the state's plan to kill programs well-proven to slash diabetes and other chronic disease, activists, providers and patients rallied outside the state Health Department in lower Manhattan today, World Diabetes Day, to protest state negligence that has

caused a 100% increase in amputations in just ten years and the highest Alzheimer's rate of any major state in the Medicaid cost to the state of over \$5 billion a year.

already amputated 50,000 legs, feet and toes in the past decade and its low-income staggering under diabetes-induced (!) 3 significantly prevents diabetes itself and prevents complications by teaching lower their blood sugar."

Nor1 1 To 1 Be " SA Poo v 443 " she said. "As our public health officials know perfectly well, controlling diabetes can almost uniquely save billions of dollars while fostering vast health improvements."

When Health People brought the Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP) into homeless shelters, participants' emergency room visits plunged by 45% in six months, immediately saving \$1,000 to \$2,000 per diabetes case.

High blood sugar levels are the main contributors to the state's highest-in-the-nation costs for diabetes, heart disease and other chronic diseases, which disproportionately affect poor communities of color. But the state has cut funding for the estimated \$900 per patient cost for the Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP) while continuing to cover kidney disease and the skyrocketing number of lower-limb amputations that could be prevented by the DSMP.

And recent studies have definitively linked high blood sugar levels to the early onset of dementia and Alzheimer's. It is no accident that the Bronx has the highest levels of Alzheimer's of any county in the nation, while also suffering from runaway diabetes.

City health activists battling the diabetes epidemic joined in calls for the state to fund the DSMP.

C. Virginia Fields, the former Manhattan Borough President who now heads Black Health, called state plans to end funding for the technical assistance and training that allows community groups to provide the DSMP, is "extremely disturbing."

"African-Americans already have the highest rate of diabetes-related lower limb amputations and diabetes-induced dementia," Fields said. "How does the state justify worsening this situation? It is violating every acceptable norm of public health and its repeated vows to address health disparities."

Jairo Guzman, the Executive Director of the Mexican Coalition, echoed Fields' concerns.

"I cannot understand why New York State would want to destroy any programs like this but it is destroying the whole state support for community self-care education ---little as that is already," said Jairo Guzman, Executive Director of The Mexican Coalition. "We cannot watch anymore as Hispanic, Black, and low-income families are deeply harmed by diabetes when we know we can prevent that."

Minister John Williams, whose New Creation Community Health Empowerment has been administering the DSMP to residents of Central Brooklyn, warned city and state officials, by ending the funding, are dooming his clientele to preventable complications.

"