



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bronx AIDS Services and CitiWide Harm Reduction Merge to Form BOOM!Health

Bronx, New York (August 15, 2013) – Today, Bronx AIDS Services and CitiWide Harm Reduction announce the details of a merger that combines two already strong nonprofit organizations into an \$11.3 Million operation and consolidates different but complementary services in a new groundbreaking service model. The new model actively removes the barriers to accessing primary medical care, as well as HIV and viral hepatitis prevention services, while supporting clients and program participants on their journey towards wellness and self sufficiency.

The newly merged and rebranded Bronx-based **BOOM!Health** organization will serve over 8,000 New Yorkers annually with over 50,000 outreach contacts, and will become one of the most comprehensive community-based service providers in the United States led by people of color, with a full range of prevention, syringe access, health coordination, behavioral health, housing, legal, advocacy and wellness services for the hardest to reach communities. Social business ventures are planned to ensure the merged agency's sustainability, while providing a concrete path out of poverty for clients via job training and community service opportunities.

"BOOM!Health will enable New Yorkers living with and at highest risk for illness, addiction, homelessness and poverty to realize their full potential by integrating services to create a seamless continuum of prevention and care. When fully integrated, BOOM!Health will offer services at two state-of-the art sites; the Harm Reduction Center on at 226 East 144 Street and the other will serve as a Wellness Center in the South Bronx that will co-locate BOOM!Health's prevention, health home, health care coordination, housing and legal services, along with a second primary care clinic and community pharmacy. The new site will also feature an LGBTQ and Youth drop-in center," states Mera Eisen, MSW, founding and current board Chair of the Bronx AIDS Services Board of Directors.

Together, Jose M. Davila, MPH, President & Chief Administrative Officer and Robert Cordero, MSW, President and Chief Program Officer will lead the new powerhouse organization – combining their history, administrative, fiscal, program development, advocacy and leadership skills – toward a new mission of *Health, Wellness and Safety for All*.

Central Office
540 East Fordham Rd
Bronx, NY 10458
718.295.5605

Harm Reduction Center
226 East 144th St
Bronx, NY 10451
718.292.7718

Prevention Center
953 Southern Blvd, 2nd Fl
Bronx, NY 10459
718.295.5690

www.boomhealth.org



"We knew from the beginning that the merger would only work if we could put our egos aside and stay focused on *"Why"* we were doing this," states Davila. Cordero notes, "This merger is about effectively using every dollar we have to remove barriers to access and deliver the highest possible quality services to the communities we serve. We are so proud of our boards, staff, clients and participants for believing in our vision, asking the tough questions and contributing – at all levels – to the development of our new, integrated service model."

"Business as usual is over. An innovative and mission-driven organization deserves an innovative and powerful name," states Sidney B. Joyner, Chair of CitiWide's Board of Directors. "BOOM!Health is an impactful model in which clients, program participants and community members can seamlessly access a wide array of services previously offered by each organization, regardless of their point of entry. That is what this is all about," Joyner notes. In addition, "All 120 staff jobs and over 70 peer volunteer positions will be retained in the merger process."

"I am grateful to be among internal stakeholders to participate in the rebranding process. I was so impressed by the level of inclusiveness and transparency, which is very important. I believe that the new BOOM!Health name really reveals our strengths and assets," adds Clarence H., BAS client and Consumer Advisory Board member.

Nancy Mahon, President and Chief Executive Officer of the MAC AIDS Fund, is thrilled, "The leadership and purpose of BOOM!Health is visionary and authentic. We strongly support its bold mission. This is a creative model of prevention and care that will offer people living with HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, and other chronic health conditions the respect, quality care, and the support they need to lead healthy and productive lives, while protecting communities from further disease burden in the South Bronx and beyond."

"First as a program participant, then a Citiwide employee, I'm so proud to be part of BOOM!Health. I know first-hand how stigmatizing it can be to seek services from a syringe exchange program or an AIDS service organization," said Elizabeth Lopez, outreach worker and one over 35 internal stakeholders to participant in the process to come up with the new agency name. "The staff is excited to unite under the new BOOM!Health name and service model to do what we do best: transform the lives of people in need -- with dignity and respect."

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About BOOM!Health

BOOM!Health is a merger of equals between Bronx AIDS Services and CitiWide Harm Reduction. We are going *Beyond Our Original Missions* to transform lives through health and wellness. Go to www.BOOMHealth.org for more information.

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