



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## Senator Rivera and Borough President Diaz Launch Bronx CAN Health Initiative

GUSTAVO RIVERA June 13, 2011

| ISSUE: **HEALTH**



On Saturday, June 11, Senator Gustavo Rivera (D,WF-Bronx) and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. came together to announce the launch of the Bronx CAN (Change Attitudes Now) Health Initiative at the Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center in the 33rd Senate District alongside community partners. You can learn more about this event and upcoming events between June 11, 2011 and October 24, 2011 on our website at [www.bronxcan.com](http://www.bronxcan.com).

The Bronx CAN Health Initiative brings together individuals, doctors and other health providers, places of worship, community gardens and community centers, schools, and civic-minded groups of all kinds to promote the types of behaviors that lead to healthy lifestyles. The goal of the Bronx CAN Health Initiative is to have all the members of our community – young and old alike – build healthier lives, free of ailments like obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and cardiovascular disease.

As part of the initiative, community members signed up for the Bronx CAN Health Challenge, set their own personal health goals with the assistance of health care providers that were at Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center to provide support. Goals included losing weight, exercising a certain amount of times a week, quitting smoking, and bringing down cholesterol levels. Bronxites can continue to sign up for the Bronx CAN Health Challenge online at [www.bronxcan.com](http://www.bronxcan.com) or by visiting Senator Rivera's offices at 2432 Grand Concourse, Suite 506.

"We cannot allow for the Bronx to continue being the unhealthiest county in New York State," said Senator Gustavo Rivera. "As a policy maker, I am working to bring healthier options to Bronxites, including green grocery stores, farmers markets and more fresh produce. But there is one thing we all need to take ownership of - including me - and that is our own personal health habits and behavior. That is why I am taking the Bronx CAN Health Challenge and have made my own personal health goal of losing 20 pounds. I invite more Bronxites to join me and set their own personal goal as part of the Bronx CAN Health Challenge."

"It is our hope that the Bronx CAN Health initiative will be expanded not just within the 33rd District, but across the entire Bronx, over the next year," said

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. Bronxites are always looking for new ways to develop a healthy lifestyle, and my office is always happy to encourage them. I am proud that my colleague, State Senator Gustavo Rivera, is standing up for the health of his district and the entire Bronx by committing himself to becoming healthier over the course of this summer, and I wish him the best of luck in meeting his goals."

"The Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center are proud to be Bronx CAN Health partners," said Kelly Garcia, Youth Coordinator for the Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center. "We have just completed our own youth health challenge and are looking forward to continue working with all the kids and adults and that come to Mary Mitchell to participate in the Bronx CAN Health Challenge, attend Bronx CAN events and to continue to help give them the support they need to lead healthier lives."

"As physicians on the front lines of care in the Bronx, CIR members know from experience that the work we do in the hospitals will be insufficient on risk factors like obesity unless we also try to solve them in our communities," said Dr. Yusef Williams, a Regional Vice President for New York for the Committee of Interns and Residents/SEIU Healthcare. "We salute Senator Rivera and Borough President Diaz for not just talking the talk about the importance of prevention and primary care to combat our public health crises, but also walking the walk – in this case, literally! We appreciate their leadership and their understanding that we all have a stake in changing attitudes to create a healthier Bronx."

"I am excited to see so many community organizations and government partners working together to make the Bronx, and particularly the 33rd Senate District a healthier place," said Dr. Jane Bedell, Assistant Commissioner for the Bronx District Public Health Office. "The Northwest Bronx has some of the highest rates of obesity, diabetes, asthma and heart disease both in the Bronx and throughout New York City. Despite these statistics, Bronxites have shown they want to lead healthier lives and I am confident that with the support of the

Bronx CAN Health Initiative, Bronxites will be inspired to set personal health goals and begin to adapt healthier long-term habits."