



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ted O'Brien

## First national "African-American Hepatitis-C Action Day" proclaimed by Senator O'Brien

TED O'BRIEN July 25, 2013

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*Meets with community, government and health organizational leaders to discuss Hepatitis-C awareness and testing*

**ROCHESTER, N.Y.** – Today, Senator Ted O'Brien met with representatives of a coalition promoting citizen awareness of and testing for Hepatitis-C in the African-American community, striving to raise awareness and honoring the coalition for their efforts to fight this severe public health risk.

"One of my primary responsibilities as a legislator is to keep the people of New York state healthy and safe," said Senator O'Brien. "It is my honor to be involved with this effort to promote awareness and, even more importantly, testing for Hepatitis-C."

Joined by Rev. Roosevelt Dixon, chair of the Rochester Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Dr. Byron Kennedy, Director of the Monroe County Health Department and other leaders from community and health organizations such as the Anthony L. Jordan Health Center, speakers shared information on the serious chronic health risk presented by Hepatitis-C. Nearly 200,000 New Yorkers carry Hepatitis-C, with 75 percent of those being Baby Boomers born between 1945 and 1965.

The press conference highlighted that free testing is being offered at three healthcare facilities throughout the city of Rochester on this day of action. Those facilities are the Jordan Center at 82 Holland St. and two locations of Trillium Health, at 259 Monroe Ave. in the "Monroe Square" building and at 416 Central Ave.

Testing is especially important because Hepatitis-C infection can easily remain undetected until cirrhosis or even liver failure has begun. The test requires only a small amount of blood and returns a result in 20 minutes.

This session, the New York State Legislature passed a new law requiring health facilities to offer Hepatitis-C testing in order to combat this threat. Senator O'Brien supported the bill both in the Health Committee and when it was presented to the full Senate.

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*Sen. O'Brien represents the 55th district in the Senate, which is made up of the eastern half of Monroe County and the western half of Ontario County, including much of the city of Rochester.*