



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

## Senator Serrano and the New York City Health Department Encourage Healthy Eating in East Harlem/Harlem

JOSE M. SERRANO September 16, 2016

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(East Harlem/Harlem, NY)- Senator Serrano provided proclamations to markets, bodegas and delis in East Harlem/Harlem that completed criteria set forth by the Shop Healthy NYC initiative. Shop Healthy NYC is a program by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene aimed at tackling chronic health problems caused by the lack of availability of healthy food in our neighborhoods. Shop Healthy asks bodegas, delis, and supermarkets to limit or minimize the availability of junk foods and maximize the healthy food options

and fresh produce in their stores. The Senator presented Wild Olive Market on 125th Street in East Harlem with a New York State proclamation for their efforts to promote healthier eating.

**"The communities I represent in East Harlem suffer from some of the worst health disparities anywhere. While many factors contribute to these disparities, lack of neighborhood access to healthy foods is a major contributing factor. Through the efforts of the ever expanding Shop Healthy NYC program and the New York City Department of Health, we are encouraging local markets to take a more proactive approach in addressing health disparities caused by unhealthy eating. I applaud Wild Olive Market and all of the local shops and bodegas taking the bold step toward better neighborhood health by providing and promoting healthy food choices in their stores."**

Shop Healthy NYC works to increase access to healthier food in neighborhoods with high rates of chronic illnesses that are related to diet. Data shows that 34% of residents in the Health Department's East and Central Harlem District Public Office area were overweight or obese, compared to 25% of the city as a whole. Obesity can lead to several chronic conditions including diabetes and heart disease. In the East and Central Harlem area, almost 14% of adults reported having diabetes compared to 11% of adults in other NYC neighborhoods.

Senator Serrano is passionate about the overall health and wellness of the residents of New York State. He has spent his career advocating for important health initiatives like increased green space and recreational opportunities in our communities. The Senator has passed legislation to study and remedy the causes of health disparities in the neighborhoods he represents. Most recently, the Senator partnered with various health groups, such as NYC Health Department's East Harlem and Bronx Public Health Offices, the New York StateWide Senior Action Council and the Food Bank for New York City, to inform constituents about free health services available to them.