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CONGRESSWOMAN NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

SUMMER 2008

Velázquez Brings Resources for New Family Health Clinic in Brooklyn



Brooklyn will soon be home to a new, full-service family health clinic thanks to the efforts of Congresswoman Velázquez and the Wyckoff Heights Medical Center.

Federal support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will help improve access to medical care for the neighborhood's hard-working families.

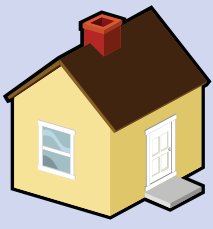
"This new health clinic will be dedicated to addressing the needs of Brooklyn's working families and provide them with top-quality care and preventative services," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "The family clinic is a much needed and welcome addition to the neighborhood."

The Wyckoff Heights Medical Center has begun to unveil services as part of the new family health center, but will officially open its doors in September. The walk-in clinic will be located within the hospital and will offer assistance that meets the demands of busy working families. For example, it will provide extended evening and weekend hours to better fit their schedules. The staff will also provide disease prevention information to help families take a pro-active approach to ensuring their health.

Providing Legal Guidance to Homeowners Facing Foreclosure

New Yorkers at risk of losing their homes due to foreclosure deserve sound legal advice. Recognizing this need, Congresswoman Velázquez fought to ensure that her initiative to make legal counseling services more accessible was included in the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act, signed into law by President Bush on July 30.

The assistance included in the comprehensive housing bill comes in the form of a \$30 million grant program targeting the nation's hardest hit areas and low-income homeowners. With the funding, legal service providers will have the expanded capacity to reach more homeowners to provide them with sound legal advice.



"With nearly 700 homes in foreclosure in my District alone, it's clear that our neighbors need help. Homeowners deserve to have someone on their side during the home buying process. Through education and legal assistance we can stem the tide of foreclosures," Congresswoman Velázquez said.

"There are many homeowners in New York City who are struggling to stay afloat," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "By providing a helping hand to homeowners in the hardest-hit areas, we can start saving our communities one home at a time."

Having trouble with your mortgage payment? Call a HUD-approved counselor or your loan provider for free advice.

To speak with a counselor:

HOPE Hotline:
888-995-HOPE

Neighborhood Housing Services Foreclosure Prevention: 718-732-8118

Cypress Hill Local Development Corporation:
718-647-2800

Addressing Hunger Needs by Expanding Food Stamp Program

A new initiative introduced by Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez strengthens the federal food stamp program to help New Yorkers keep food on the table as they search for a new job. The Food Security Act of 2008 (H.R. 6651) would provide additional food stamp coverage for unemployed workers. This not only helps our neighbors, but also fuels the local economy.

"Food stamp dollars go right back into the local economy, providing support for those in need and bolstering community businesses," said Congresswoman Velázquez.

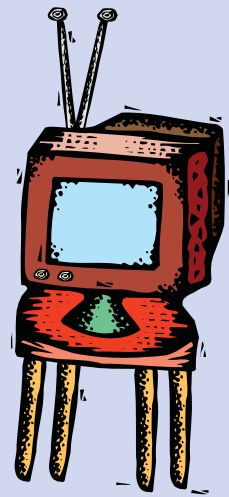
With the tightening job market, it now takes one out of every five unemployed workers six months or more to secure a new job. However, jobless workers without children or other dependents can only receive three months of food stamp benefits.

The Congresswoman's reforms to the food stamp program could be implemented quickly and cover the gap during those extra months it often takes to find employment.

"When New Yorkers find their resources stretched thin, the food stamp program puts meals on millions of tables. Extending the program for unemployed workers offers fast relief for those struggling to make ends meet," she said.

New York Goes Digital

Many of New York City's rooftop antennas and household rabbit ears may soon disappear as the city and nation goes digital on February 17, 2009. For those who have analog TV sets, government coupons are available to provide a discount on the digital converters but must be used before they expire.



"The switch to digital will provide more options and higher quality television for all New Yorkers," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "It is important to take advantage of the coupons right away to purchase converter boxes."

Each family is eligible for two \$40 coupons to use toward the purchase of converter boxes. It is important to use them promptly, because they expire 90 days after the issue date. Congresswoman Velázquez encourages families to take advantage of the coupons to help defray the cost of the switch from analog to digital.

To order your coupons, visit: www.dtv2009.gov or call 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009) and 1-866-495-1161 (Spanish).

Velázquez Calls for Funds to Clean Newtown Creek

Congresswoman Velázquez has called on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use the strongest tool in its arsenal for the clean-up of Newtown Creek.

With the support of local environmental advocates, she has asked the EPA to designate the area a Superfund site. This would bring much-needed federal support to the site of the largest coastal oil spill in American history.

“It’s time for the EPA to acknowledge what the people who live here already know: the contamination of Newtown Creek is nothing short of a human trag-

edy,” Congresswoman Velázquez said. “The EPA should use its strongest tools possible to begin remediation. The time to act is now.”

If preliminary tests find high levels of toxic chemicals at four locations along the Creek, as much as 90 percent of the clean-up could be paid for with federal dollars. Previous tests conducted by the state found lead, mercury and chemicals in the area of the spill.

An estimated 17 million gallons of oil spilled across 55 acres of Newtown Creek in 1978, seeping into the Creek



and settling under homes and businesses in Greenpoint. To date, only about 9.4 million gallons have been cleaned, and Congresswoman Velázquez is dedicated to getting the job finished.

Congresswoman Velázquez Pitches In With Eco-Friendly, Green Roof Project



Federal support from the U.S. Department of Energy has been designated for the creation of a green roof garden atop the Linda Tool & Die Corporation’s factory in Red Hook.

“Green roofs can lead the way in helping New York City businesses and residents deal with the rising costs of heating and

cooling their buildings. They also present new opportunities for green space in dense urban areas,” she said.

The Congresswoman secured federal resources for this effort by the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC) to promote cost-effective and environmentally-friendly projects. Green roofs reduce heat reflections and help lower energy costs. Additionally, as the rooftop vegetation absorbs rainfall it prevents sewer overflow from polluting the New York Harbor.

“The benefits are clear: lower energy prices, cleaner rivers and a more eco-friendly city. I’m proud to be part of this energy-efficient project.” Congresswoman Velázquez said.

Improving Health Care Coverage for New York Small Businesses

As the Chair of the House Committee on Small Business, Congresswoman Velázquez is working to curb the rising costs of health insurance plans for entrepreneurs. A new initiative aims to make affordable healthcare coverage a reality for the owners and employees of small businesses.

“New York City is home to 200,000 small businesses, which help to make our neighborhoods vibrant places to live and work,” said Congresswoman Velázquez. “By giving entrepreneurs viable health care options, we are helping their businesses succeed.”



The Congresswoman has introduced a plan, known as the CHOICE Act, to help small businesses offer health insurance to employees through a refundable tax credit of 65%. It also allows entrepreneurs the opportunity to negotiate far better rates for coverage by pooling their employees with those of other businesses in voluntary health cooperatives.

“The CHOICE Act recognizes that solving the national health care crisis begins by addressing the health insurance needs of small businesses,” said Congresswoman Velázquez. “Reducing insurance rates by more than 30 percent will ensure that our neighbors have access to reliable, quality health care.”

Victory Ensures Moore Street Market Will Live On

The merchants of the Moore Street Market have won a major victory in the effort to preserve their businesses and prevent the demolition of this decades-old, public market in Bushwick. Congresswoman Velázquez advocated tirelessly on behalf of the merchants, insisting that the City recognize the importance of the market to the local economy and its benefit to Brooklyn life.

“La Marqueta has been a cornerstone of the Brooklyn community for more than 65 years” Congresswoman Velázquez said. “This victory strengthens tradition in entrepreneurship and preserves this local treasure.”

After months of negotiations and growing community support, the merchants association reached an agreement with the New York City Economic Development Corporation to extend their lease for years to come. This will ensure the fresh fruits and vegetables, traditional Latin American food and other services will continue to be offered. It will also provide the market’s 17 independent vendors, who employ more than 40 people, the opportunity to grow their businesses as they look toward the future with a renewed sense of opportunity.

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