



50 Years and Looking Forward

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The Bronx Council on the Arts Partners with Lincoln Hospital to Launch the Lincoln Arts Exchange

(Bronx – February 2, 2012) The Bronx Council on the Arts is proud to be a partnering organization with Lincoln Hospital in the launching of the **Lincoln Art Exchange Program**, an artist-specific healthcare program at Lincoln Hospital offering a unique option for eligible NYC-based artists who do not have health insurance to exchange their creative services for comprehensive healthcare. **See Lincoln Hospital's press release below.**

LINCOLN HOSPITAL ALLOWS ARTISTS TO BARTER TALENT FOR HEALTH CARE

Tony and Grammy Awards winner Lin-Manuel Miranda, Hip Hop Pioneer Roxanne Shante, The Actors' Fund, The Bronx Council on the Arts and Others Join HHC President and Lincoln Hospital Executive Director to Officially Launch "Lincoln Art Exchange" Program

(January 23, 2012 – Bronx, NY) Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center today officially announced an innovative program that allows artists of all disciplines the opportunity to exchange their creative services for medical care. The program, branded as the **"Lincoln Art Exchange"**, is designed to address the growing number of independent and freelance artists who cannot afford to enroll in health insurance plans and have become an at-risk population that lacks access to quality health care. Accompanied by Tony and Grammy Awards winning actor Lin-Manuel Miranda, Hip Hop celebrity Roxanne Shante and representatives from arts and philanthropy organizations, Iris Jimenez-Hernandez, HHC Sr. Vice President and Lincoln Hospital Executive Director and Alan D. Aviles, HHC President and CEO, officially launched and gave details of the program during a press conference held in the lobby of the Bronx facility.

"I am pleased to announce that, as of January 2012, uninsured New York City artists will be able to trade their artistic talents for health care at Lincoln Hospital," said Mrs. Jimenez Hernandez. "This invaluable initiative is an effort aimed at reducing health disparities and improving health outcomes among our artists. In this effort, the collective participation of our partners is an important element in identifying and recruiting artists that will benefit from our program."

Tony and Grammy Awards winner Lin-Manuel Miranda, most celebrated for writing and starring in the Broadway musical *In the Heights*, is among the personalities who have partnered with Lincoln Hospital in this effort. He said, "This is an exciting, potentially win-win venture for both New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation and the artistic community. There are many uninsured artists in New York City; and to be able to contribute their creativity and talents at Lincoln Hospital while simultaneously gaining access to medical care, is ingenious."

"We welcome this important partnership with Lin Manuel Miranda, Roxanne Shante, The Actors' Fund, The Bronx Council on the Arts, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Teatro Pregones and Comunilife," said HHC President and CEO Alan D. Aviles. "This is a timely program for the growing number of artists who perform and reside in New York City, too many of whom lack health insurance. It will empower artists of all types – who add immeasurably to our City's vibrancy and cultural riches – to access quality health care on the basis of their art and live longer and healthier lives."

Through the **Lincoln Art Exchange** program, rather than paying for health care out-of-pocket, artists may pay through an art exchange barter system. For example, for every hour of musical performances, painting a mural or any other creative activity or service, the artist earns 40 "health credits" (the equivalent of \$40) toward medical care. Eligible artists – ranging from actors, musicians, dancers, poets, writers and anyone making a living through a creative means – can access an array of affordable, comprehensive services, that include doctor visits, laboratory tests, hospitalizations, emergency care, medical and surgical procedures, dental care, prescriptions,

ambulatory surgery and other services provided by the hospital. Eligibility will be based on the HHC Options program, a New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation's financial services program that offers a sliding fee scale to low income or uninsured New Yorkers with fees starting as low as \$15 for a doctor's visit.

Once enrolled in the program, artists will participate in activities throughout the hospital, such as reading to patients, performing at hospital special events, painting murals in our clinics and in-patient units, art gallery presentations and other events that will enhance the hospital environment and the patient and staff experience.

Hip hop celebrity and WLIB radio personality Roxanne Shante made reference to the significance of preventative health care. She said, "It's not the money you've saved after your career that makes you wealthy. It's being able to make money after your career because you're healthy." She added, "The artistic community is a vital part of our population and it deserves to get the highest quality of medical care. The *Lincoln Art Exchange* program can be the path to help artists take charge of their own health."

Renata Marinaro, Director of Health Services for the Actors' Fund Eastern Region, said, "Artists often work on a freelance basis and aren't eligible for job-based insurance. Many have lower incomes and can't afford the astronomically high private insurance rates in New York. Lincoln Art Exchange makes health care accessible to artists and recognizes the value of creative workers to the health and vitality of our community."

"It's a wonderful and creative way to leverage the value of artistic work toward obtaining affordable care, especially given our national health care crisis," said Deirdre Scott, Bronx Council on the Arts Executive Director. "With Lincoln's new program, hundreds of artists will now have access to medical care. I encourage artists and those from the creative industries to take advantage of the program and access health care services right here in our borough."

First initiated at Woodhull Hospital in Brooklyn in 2005, Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center is the second HHC facility to implement the program and the only one in Bronx County. Other cultural organizations who have partnered with the hospital for recruitment of artists are The Bronx Museum, Teatro Pregones and Comunilife.

Those artists who are interested in joining or need more information can call the dedicated Art Exchange Program telephone line at 855-LIN-ARTS (546-2787) and speak with Colette M. Barrow, Program Coordinator. You may also visit our website at LincolnArtExchange@nychhc.org

About Lincoln Hospital

Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center, located at 234 E. 149th Street in the Bronx, is a 347-bed, acute care level 1 trauma center with the busiest single site emergency department in the region. The hospital emphasizes primary care and specialty medicine and uses the latest advances in medical science. Lincoln Hospital is a member of the Generations/ Northern Manhattan Health Network, a healthcare conglomerate which is part of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation.

About HHC

The New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) is a \$6.7 billion integrated health care delivery system with its own 385,000 member health plan, MetroPlus, and is the largest municipal health care organization in the country. HHC serves 1.3 million New Yorkers every year and more than 450,000 are uninsured. HHC provides medical, mental health and substance abuse services through its 11 acute care hospitals, four skilled nursing facilities, six large diagnostic and treatment centers and more than 80 community based clinics. HHC Health and Home Care also provides in-home services for New Yorkers. HHC was the 2008 recipient of the National Quality Forum and The Joint Commissions John M. Eisenberg Award for Innovation in Patient Safety and Quality. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/hhc.

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