



For immediate release

Contact: Robin West
(718) 589-1687 x 2802; Cell: 347-203-8489
robin.west@urbanhealthplan.org

**FROM THE BRONX IS BURNING TO THE BRONX IS GROWING:
URBAN HEALTH PLAN CELEBRATES 35 YEARS OF ACCESSIBLE
HEALTH CARE IN THE BRONX**

Do you remember 1974? The year of NYC's fiscal crisis? President Nixon's resignation? The Hearst kidnapping? For Richard Izquierdo, MD, it was the year he achieved his life-long dream of providing affordable, quality health care to his South Bronx community. 1974 was the year he founded Urban Health Plan, a federally qualified health center which provide care to the medically underserved.

What began as a two –story clinic at the intersection of Westchester Avenue and Southern Boulevard with 3,000 patients and 12 associates, is now a growing network employing 442 associates, serving 31,000 patients at three satellite clinics, five school-based clinics, four off-site programs and a new family health center in Corona, Queens.

UHP celebrates its 35 years of providing health care and services to the Bronx with a gala at Pier Sixty in Chelsea Piers, on Thursday, October 29, 2009. **Lynda Baquero, correspondent with WNBC 4 New York, serves as the evening's master of ceremonies.**

WHO: Urban Health Plan

WHAT: 35th anniversary gala

WHERE: Pier 60, Chelsea Piers, West 23rd Street and Westside Highway

WHEN: Thursday, October 29, 2009, 6 pm – 11 pm

The gala also celebrates the milestone birthday of UHP founder Richard Izquierdo, MD and honors Breger-Bermel Architects; Canyon Ranch Institute; and Joann Rivera-Baker, a UHP board member, for their commitment and service to UHP and its patients.

"As the Bronx has grown and evolved over the past 35 years, so have we," says Paloma Izquierdo-Hernandez, President and Chief Executive Officer, Urban Health Plan. "We've made strides to improve health care among our patients and to reduce health disparities in our community. But in spite of all that we achieved, the need still exists and continues to grow. Our patients are faced with poverty, unemployment and lack of education, all of which impact their health and wellness. By treating the whole person with quality medical care and social services, we ensure their health, emotional and social needs are met, so that they can enjoy an improved quality of life," said Izquierdo-Hernandez.

"The Bronx was a different place when we created Urban Health Plan," says Richard Izquierdo, MD, founder, Urban Health Plan. "At that time many residents and businesses were leaving but we stayed. I wanted to provide affordable, quality health care to our neighbors,--that was my purpose. Thirty-five years later, we've expanded to help other underserved communities like Corona, Queens. We've never strayed from our original mission," said Dr. Izquierdo.

To schedule interviews with Dr. Izquierdo and Paloma Hernandez-Izquierdo about Urban Health Plan prior to the gala on October 29, 2009 or for more information, contact Robin West, communications manager at 718-589-1687 x2826.

About Urban Health Plan:

Urban Health Plan (UHP) is a network of federally qualified community health centers based in the South Bronx and Queens. Its mission is to improve the health status of underserved communities. In 2008, UHP served 31,000 patients through 171,000 patient visits at four clinic sites, five school-based clinics, and four off-sites. It has served the Hunts Point, Mott Haven and other surrounding communities of the Bronx since 1974.

As a federally qualified health center, UHP plays a vital role in providing health services to poor and medically underserved populations who often have difficulty accessing quality health care.

Over the years, UHP has developed many health improvement initiatives including a nationally acclaimed asthma management program, programs in childhood obesity prevention, nutrition, HIV/AIDS care, and mental health services. UHP is one of the first community health centers in New York who fully uses electronic medical records and is currently using iris recognition technology to identify patients.

In 2006 UHP received the National Exemplary Award from the United States Environmental Protection Agency for its efforts to reduce asthma rates in Hunts Point. It has been named one of the top twenty-five Hispanic not-for-profits in the country by Hispanic Business Magazine for the past three years. In the summer of 2009 UHP was named one of the top twenty community health centers in the country and received the Davies Award for Excellence from the Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) for its excellence in the use of electronic health records.

More information on UHP can be found at www.urbanhealthplan.org.