



**DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

2 LAFAYETTE STREET
New York, New York 10007-1392

Edwin Méndez-Santiago, LCSW
Commissioner

CONTACT:
Christopher Miller
Mira Browne
(212) 442-1111
cmiller@aging.nyc.gov

#22P

—*For Immediate Release*

‘Building Bridges between Families and Healthcare Providers’ Focus of Alzheimer’s Conference

*DFTA debuts “Understanding Alzheimer’s Disease” DVD;
Kate Mulgrew of Broadway’s Equus keynotes luncheon*

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK – October 31, 2008 – Ushering in November’s National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month, the Department for the Aging’s 24th Annual Mayoral Conference on Alzheimer’s Disease today highlighted the need for families of the estimated 200,000 New Yorkers suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and healthcare providers to work in partnership. As a part of the effort to increase awareness and education about Alzheimer’s disease, DFTA debuted a new and interactive DVD, “Understanding Alzheimer’s Disease.” This four-part learning course, provided in six languages, focuses on the myriad of challenges caregivers face when managing the different stages of Alzheimer’s disease. Giving caregivers a voice, Kate Mulgrew, currently starring in Broadway’s *Equus*, shared her experience as caregiver for her mother who also lives with Alzheimer’s disease. Approximately 1,000 caregivers, older New Yorkers and mental health professionals attended the 24th Annual Mayoral Conference on Alzheimer’s disease today at the Brooklyn Marriot Hotel.

“Today’s conference underlines the principle of person-centered care that is informing changes in aging services,” said Commissioner Edwin Méndez-Santiago, LCSW. “The Department is committed to tailoring support services to the needs of the older individual to the extent possible and to collaboration among all parties involved in providing care - including families. The Department’s for the Aging’s Alzheimer’s and Caregivers Resource Center is one of our many programs working to meet the diverse needs of New York’s growing aging population.”

To assist caregivers and other Alzheimer’s disease professionals with coping strategies, the conference workshops featured practical guidance, ranging from reading the cues for pain management of individuals with cognitive impairment, to easing a facility stay through communication strategies, facilitating discharge from facility to the community, and understanding and working with the Alzheimer’s disease patient’s shifts in independence. Paying for care was the subject of a workshop of Medicare and Medicaid updates. As a part of the Department for the Aging’s effort to make the conference culturally and linguistically appropriate to a wide audience, the plenary and two workshops were simultaneously translated into Spanish, Mandarin, and Russian.

During the conference plenary, Commissioner Méndez-Santiago presented innovation awards for their continued outstanding work and contributions to the field of aging to Emma Shuman and Gertrude Steinberg, both in their mid-90’s, who have dedicated decades to improving the lives of people caring for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease under the auspices of New York University

Visit us at www.nyc.gov/aging

School of Medicine for decades. The Commissioner also acknowledged Johnson & Johnson Consumer Products Company for their award-winning “Strength for Caring” website.

The conference was presented by the New York City Department for the Aging, DFTA’s non-profit arm the Aging in New York Fund, the Fisher Center for Alzheimer’s Research Foundation, in collaboration with the Alzheimer’s Association, New York City Chapter. For more information regarding services, seniors can call 311 or visit DFTA’s website at www.nyc.gov/aging.

In addition to the annual conference, the New York City Department for the Aging offers free support services to caregivers through its NYC Caregiver program. NYC Caregiver resource centers are located throughout the five boroughs. For more information about the NYC Caregiver program, please visit www.nyccaregiver.org or call 311 and ask for the nearest NYC Caregiver Resource Center nearest you. Additional resources can be found at www.nyccaregiver.org

###

Contact: Christopher Miller/Mira Browne (212) 442-1111