

**Remarks by
William Walsh
Sr. Vice President
HHC North Bronx Health Network
At Press Conference to Announce Reopening of Maternity Services at North
Central Bronx Hospital
March 17, 2014**

Good afternoon. I'm Bill Walsh, Sr. Vice President of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation's North Bronx Health Network, which includes North Central Bronx Hospital and Jacobi Medical Center.

I am joined by Dr. Michael Zinaman, our new Chairman of Ob/Gyn services, to announce our plans to restore vital women's health services to the North Bronx community and get back to delivering babies at North Central Bronx Hospital.

We are also joined by a number of elected officials, labor and community leaders who stand with us today in support of restoring these much needed services: Congressman Charles Rangel, Public Advocate Leticia James, and Council Members Andy King and Fernando Cabrera.

Last August, we were forced to make a painful decision and suspended Labor and Delivery services at North Central Bronx Hospital. We faced a critical point -- our staffing levels became insufficient to provide the full spectrum of services at two hospitals. We lost senior staff and our patient volume was suffering. Without strong clinical leadership in place, we could not attract the senior talent required to get back on track.

After we successfully recruited Dr. Michael Zinaman to lead Ob/Gyn services, we announced in November our commitment to re-open the maternity service. In fact, Congressman Rangel and Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz were by my side.

With the on-going support of our elected representatives, with cooperation of our labor partners, Community Advisory Board and with the commitment of our staff, we are making significant progress towards our goal of re-opening the service.

Last week, we received approval from the New York State Department of Health to allow us the necessary time to complete all the steps required for safely restoring maternity and newborn services at North Central Bronx Hospital with a target of doing so by the end of the summer.

We are prepared to make an investment of nearly \$4.5 million for restructuring the staff and operations of the Women's Health Services at NCBH, and to upgrade some of the patient care areas, and re-establish a quality and robust community hospital maternity unit and enhanced access for ambulatory Ob/GYN services.

A new staff model will be in place 24/7/365 with a core provider team including licensed midwives, physician assistants, specialty trained registered nurses, anesthesiologists & neonatologist. The central role of midwives will be maintained and the team will be staffed and supervised by senior obstetricians and gynecologist.

Our stakeholders can be confident that our clinical model is appropriate for a high quality community hospital obstetrical service.

Before I ask Dr. Zinaman to speak about our recruitment efforts and other details of our plan, I want to thank two special groups of folks – our patients and our staff.

Throughout this period, the women we serve have been incredibly supportive and loyal. They took advantage of the free shuttle service we provided when we were concerned for their safety and had to suspend service and moved to Jacobi Medical Center. They were pleased to see many of the same providers who followed their care and were able to deliver their babies there. In fact, about 80 percent of the patients who were receiving prenatal care at North Central Bronx Hospital continued their care at Jacobi.

I also want to thank our staff from both North Central Bronx and Jacobi Medical Center. They understood the tough choice we had to make and worked as one team in order to provide the most seamless and safe care to our patients.

And to close, I just want to again note how pleased we are to have the support of our elected officials including Assembly Member Dinowitz, Council Members Cohen, Torres and Fernando, who were unable to join us today but are represented by staff, our labor partners and the community. We look forward to working with all of you to ensure that women in the North Bronx take full advantage of the comprehensive services available in this hospital.

We need your help, and the help of all the members of the community, to get the word out that North Central Bronx Hospital will be open for the important business of delivering babies.

Now, I'd like to introduce Dr. Michael Zinaman nationally renowned Obstetrician/Gynecologists with a proven record of success. He received his Medical Degree from the State University of New York Downstate Medical Center, and completed his fellowship at Georgetown University and the National Institutes of Health. He is a talented researcher, an educator who has trained a generation of physicians, and is widely published. Moreover he is an accomplished Minimally Invasive Surgeon and has been recognized as a Best Doctor during his tenure in Chicago and Boston.