



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **LINCOLN MEDICAL CENTER OPENS NEW INTEGRATED WELLNESS CENTER**

*Initiative Will Improve Health Outcomes in Patients with Serious Mental Illness,  
Reduce Emergency Room Visits and Number of Hospitalizations*

Bronx, New York – Lincoln Medical Center announced today the opening of the Lincoln Integrated Wellness Center--an innovative program designed to provide primary care and behavioral health services for adult psychiatric patients under one roof. Using an integrated, collaborative care model, the Center is co-located with the established Behavioral Health Clinic, providing easy access to essential services for a vulnerable population in need of a dedicated patient-centered medical home.

The program--which targets patients with serious mental illness and other chronic conditions--comes at a time when fifty-five percent of the patients who use Lincoln's Behavioral Health Clinic have at least one chronic condition (pulmonary, diabetes, cardiovascular disease or HIV) and thirty-one percent suffer from two or more conditions. Other national statistics indicate that people with serious mental illness die 15 to 25 years earlier than the general population while 60 percent of the increased mortality among people with schizophrenia is due to preventable conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular, pulmonary and infectious diseases.

This innovative approach to treating mentally ill patients with chronic medical conditions was made possible through a \$1.6 million grant over four years from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)—an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“Lincoln has stepped up to the plate to offer the extra care and coordination that this population needs,” said Denise Soares, Network Senior Vice President. “As a Network that serves communities that are disproportionately impacted by poor health outcomes, mental illness and societal constraints, it is our goal to attack health issues on all fronts. The Wellness Program serves as a model to other healthcare institutions that are equally concerned about improving the health outcomes of their behavioral health patients and providing them with all the tools necessary to lead a healthy life.”

“At Lincoln, we aim to establish best practices that combine physical and mental health—two services which have historically been treated separately,” said Milton Nuñez, Lincoln Medical Center's Executive

Director. “It is my belief that Lincoln’s Integrated Wellness Center will demonstrate that we can in fact target and treat the whole patient, not just part of the patient, in a holistic, cost-effective manner.”

Dr. Akinola Fisher, Chief of Ambulatory Care noted that, “Through this ‘one-stop-shop’ modality our staff will help patients better manage their chronic condition(s), provide them tools to live healthier lifestyles, and help them navigate through the healthcare system and a network of community resources to overcome barriers to care.”

Lincoln Integrated Wellness Center team is comprised of a primary care provider, psychiatrists, registered nurse, licensed clinical social worker, patient care associate, patient navigator, and a hospital care investigator. In addition to comprehensive medical services, the program incorporates wellness promotion, disease self-management education, linkage to community support services, referrals to specialty and subspecialty services, and coordination of transitional care.

Additionally, a volunteer program to support family caregivers of individuals with serious mental illness will be developed with a \$35,000 grant from the United Hospital Fund. For this new component of Lincoln’s Integrated Wellness Program, 15 volunteers will be recruited to facilitate family caregiver support groups and to serve as a resource for caregivers who are providing support to a family member with serious mental illness. The support groups will follow a peer-led model promoted by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

### **About Lincoln Medical Center**

Lincoln Medical 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. Winner of the 2012 American Hospital Association-McKesson Quest for Quality Finalist Award, the hospital emphasizes primary care and specialty medicine and uses the latest advances in medical science. Lincoln Medical Center 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 (HHC).

### **About HHC**

The New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) is a \$6.7 billion integrated healthcare delivery system with its own 430,000 member health plan, MetroPlus, and is the largest municipal healthcare organization in the country. HHC serves 1.4 million New Yorkers every year and more than 475,000 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 70 community based clinics. HHC Health and Home Care also provides in-home services for New Yorkers. HHC is the recipient of the National Quality Forum and The Joint Commission’s John M. Eisenberg Award for Innovation in Patient Safety and Quality. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/hhc](http://www.nyc.gov/hhc).

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