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Subject: NYC-based Children's Health Fund provides care to children in Flint, MI; Mayor de Blasio says NYC "stands ready to help however we can"



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NYC-Based Children's Health Fund Responds to Lead Crisis in Flint; Dispatches Iconic Medical Clinic to Help Kids Exposed to Lead

Mayor Bill de Blasio: New Yorkers Don't Hesitate to Step Up for Those In Need – and NYC Stands Ready to Help

***Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow and Flint Mayor Karen Weaver
Welcome Big Blue Doctor's Office on Wheels to Hurley Children's Hospital***

FLINT, MI (February 12, 2016) – In response to requests for assistance from federal, state and local authorities, New York City-based non-profit Children's Health Fund (CHF) has deployed one of its fleet of big blue mobile medical clinics from New York City to Flint, MI to help provide health resources to children who have been exposed to lead in the two years since the city switched its water supply from Lake Huron to the Flint River. CHF's iconic mobile clinic will be integrated into the services coordinated by Hurley Children's Hospital in Flint, a division of Hurley Medical Center.

"New Yorkers don't hesitate to step up when they see families in need," said **NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "Children in Flint are facing nothing short of a health and safety crisis, and the Children's Health Fund's mobile clinic will provide the vital care they need and deserve. As I've told Mayor Weaver: New York City stands ready to help however else we can."

The big blue doctor's office on wheels will soon be out in the Flint community providing valuable health resources and education. The program, named the "Flint Children's Health Project," will be fully integrated into local health systems and providers.

"This mobile medical clinic will make an enormous difference in the lives of thousands of Flint children," said U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow. "This clinic will give hope to families in Flint who are so worried about their children's health and safety. I am very pleased to be a long-time partner with the Children's Health Fund, and I am grateful they have responded to our request for help for Flint children."

CHF first brought mobile medical clinics to Michigan in 2009 in response to the severe recession and, with support from Senator Stabenow, subsequently established an ongoing project in Detroit to provide comprehensive health care services to medically underserved children. A second mobile pediatric clinic expanded service there in 2013.

“As a licensed clinical psychologist, I know firsthand the effects of lead exposure on children,” said Dr. Karen Weaver, Mayor of Flint. “It is toxic to many organs and tissues, resulting in permanent learning and behavior disorders, lowered IQ, developmental delays and cognitive deficits. This mobile pediatric clinic will be a valuable tool in making sure children in Flint affected by this lead crisis get the care and treatment that they need and deserve. We appreciate this resource and those who thought enough of our children to send it.”

Dr. Irwin Redlener, a pediatrician who is president of Children’s Health Fund and professor of public health at Columbia University, said, “We can’t turn back time and reverse the impact of lead exposure in children exposed to contaminated water. But we can make sure that every child and family has access to the screening, health care, intensive medical support and follow-up that is necessary to minimize whatever challenges they face as a result of the toxic exposure.”

Children’s Health Fund is particularly interested in making sure that children who have been exposed to lead are not further burdened by unidentified or undertreated health conditions that are known to interfere with optimal development or learning in children. These conditions known as “Health Barriers to Learning” (HBLs) include vision and hearing deficits, persistent symptomatic asthma, persistent dental pain, behavioral issues and recurrent hunger. Lead exposure is also considered a HBL.

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, head of the Pediatric Public Health Initiative in Flint, will be coordinating the Children’s Health Fund partnership with Hurley Children’s Hospital, where she serves as Director of Pediatric Public Health Initiatives for Hurley and Michigan State University College of Human Medicine. Dr. Mona, as she is universally called, sounded the alarm when her research revealed a significant increase in lead levels in the blood of Flint children. Once the scope of the lead pollution was exposed, she has been focused on solutions to this public health crisis.

"The creation of this new mobile medical clinic will help give Flint children a better chance at future success. We look forward to working with all of our community partners in an attempt to make this effective for our community," said Dr. Mona.

Children’s Health Fund has done extensive work following many U.S. major disasters that have had particular impact on children already at risk. Previous deployments followed Hurricane Andrew in Florida, the 9/11 attacks on New York’s World Trade Center, Hurricane Katrina’s devastating impact in Louisiana and Mississippi, the BP oil spill, and Superstorm Sandy that struck the mid-Atlantic region. Children’s Health Fund’s partner in responding to large-scale disasters is the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University’s Earth Institute and the Mailman School of Public Health.

ABOUT CHILDREN’S HEALTH FUND

Children’s Health Fund was created in in 1987 in response to an unacceptable situation. For thousands of kids packed into New York City’s homeless shelters, their chance for the future was dim. That inspired singer/songwriter Paul Simon and pediatrician/child advocate Irwin Redlener, MD, to do something life-changing for these children. Adequate medical care was an essential first step in helping them to be healthy and ready to learn, to have dreams and the hope of achieving them. Today, Children’s Health Fund has 50 mobile clinics, each a “doctor’s offices on wheels,” serving hundreds of locations across the country. And, over the past 28 years, the organization has grown to support over 250,000 health care encounters annually for disadvantaged children. For more information, visit childrenshealthfund.org.

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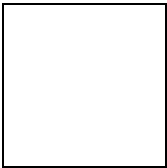
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