

SEPTEMBER 14, 2011

The Catania Chronicle

News From the Office of David A. Catania

Dear Barbara,

The Council returns from recess in the coming days and I wanted to share with you some of my priorities for the coming months. As always, if you would like further information on specific issues, please contact my office. Thank you again for reading.

-David

D.C. Makes Real Progress in Long-Standing Mental Health Lawsuit

Recently, U.S. District Judge Thomas F. Hogan gave preliminary approval of a settlement agreement in the District's long-standing Dixon case. I applaud this action by the court. After 37 years, the District can, for the first time, begin to take full control of its own mental health care system.

We have made great progress toward implementing an expansive and accessible mental health infrastructure that meets the requirements set out in the Dixon case. This preliminary approval puts the District's mental health system mere steps from finally getting out from under judicial receivership.

Dixon v. Gray dates back to 1974 when William Dixon, along with other patients at St. Elizabeths Hospital, filed suit against the District of Columbia for its lack of mental health treatment facilities aside from St. Elizabeths. Over 37 years, the District's mental health care system has been out of and back under judicial control. Over the past several years, the District has made significant progress in meeting 15 of the 19 exit criteria. The agreement eases the four remaining criteria and demonstrates the material progress the District has made in fulfilling its requirements under Dixon.

I would like to thank the Department of Mental Health, including DMH Director Stephen Baron, for their hard work.

New Health Committee Director

In last month's newsletter I introduced my new Chief-of-Staff Jordan Hutchinson. This month, I would like to introduce Justin Palmer as the new Committee on Health Committee Director. Justin previously served as the Committee's Senior Policy Advisor. He has a tremendous mastery of health policy and industry. If you have questions or concerns relating to the Committee's area of oversight, please feel free to contact the Committee office at 202-724-8170.



Office Open House a Success

On September 13th, my staff held an office open house. Several dozen people attended the two hour staff level meet-and-greet. There was a great exchange of ideas and concerns communicated to my staff by members of the public, advocacy community, and government staff. Look for another a Committee on Health open house in the coming months.



Join AARP's 'Drive to End Hunger'

According to the latest U.S. Census, over 640,000 residents of the D.C. metropolitan area are at risk of hunger, and over 200,000 of those residents are children under the age of 18. Without proper nutrition, a child's capacity to learn is diminished, an adult cannot work as effectively, and a senior citizen is more prone to becoming ill. To help fight hunger in the D.C. metropolitan area, the Capitol Area Food Bank (CAFB) distributes food to 700 nonprofit agencies and

organizations. These groups include soup kitchens, homeless shelters, recreation centers, senior centers, food pantries, day care centers and faith-based organizations. Last year the CAFB distributed 25 million pounds of food in the D.C. area.

To help the CAFB serve D.C. residents in need, AARP's District of Columbia State Office is conducting a "Drive to End Hunger in D.C." On Friday, October 14th you can help by donating food at 10 collection sites around the city and Safeway and Giant food stores between 8:30am and 6pm. Below is a list of donation sites:

SAFEWAY: 1747 Columbia Rd. NW (Ward 1)

GIANT: 1345 Park Rd. NW (Ward 1)

SAFEWAY: 490 L St. NW (Ward 2)

GIANT: 4303 Connecticut Avenue. NW (Ward 3)

SAFEWAY: 1855 Wisconsin Ave. NW (Ward 3)

SAFEWAY: 6500 Piney Branch Rd. NW (Ward 4)

GIANT: 1050 Brentwood Rd. NE (Ward 5)

SAFEWAY: 1100 4th St. SW (Ward 6)

SAFEWAY: 322 40th St. NE (Ward 7)

GIANT: 1535 Alabama Ave. SE (Ward 8)

National Sickle Cell Awareness Month

September is National Sickle Cell Awareness Month. To bring attention to this disease affecting an estimated 100,000 Americans, the Howard University Center for Sickle Cell Disease and Face of Our Children, Inc. will hold its 5th annual Stomp Out Sickle Cell Walk on Saturday, September 17th. The proceeds from this walk will go to the Howard University Center for Sickle Cell Disease and Face of Our Children, Inc. To learn more about the walk and volunteer or donation opportunities visit www.soswalk.org.

Howard University's Center for Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is celebrating its 40th anniversary of helping patients and families in the Washington Metropolitan area affected by SCD. The Center, working with Children's National Medical Center (CNMC), Howard University Hospital and the National Institute of Health, is the Washington area's leading provider of patient services for SCD.

According to NIH, SCD is more common in people of African and Mediterranean descent. It is also seen in people from South and Central America, the Caribbean and the Middle East.

Children inherit the disease when both parents have genes for the sickle hemoglobin. Because red blood cells are shaped irregularly, they tend to block

blood flow in blood vessels. Blocked blood flow can cause serious infections, pain and organ damage. Stroke and lung tissue damage can also result from Sickle Cell Disease. The only cure for Sickle Cell Disease is through a bone marrow or stem cell transplant.

Supporting the Stomp Out Sickle Cell Walk is critically important so Howard University and Face of Our Children may continue providing comprehensive medical care, research, testing, education, counseling, and community outreach.

Thank you for reading.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Catania". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

D.C. Councilmember David A. Catania