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**Congresswoman Nita Lowey Embraces Early Literacy
by Reading to Children at
Sound Shore Medical Center of Westchester
Children's Medical Group
*Congresswoman Lowey Reads Aloud to Children in Support of
Reach Out and Read Literacy Program***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – (New Rochelle, NY) July 12, 2010 -- Doctors at Sound Shore Medical Center of Westchester Children's Medical Group are sending families home from check-ups with free books and a very important prescription – “read aloud to your children.” **Congresswoman Lowey, who represents some of the families served by the hospital in the 18th New York Congressional District, paid a visit to Sound Shore Medical Center Children's Medical Group** to follow doctors' orders by reading to families and children who participate in its Reach Out and Read early literacy program. She also used the opportunity to tour the facility and see firsthand how **Reach Out and Read** helps instill a love of reading for area children.

“One of the most important things we can do to prepare children for success in school is to read to them at an early age,” said Congresswoman Nita Lowey. “I am thrilled to see the success of this early literacy program at Sound Shore Medical Center.”

Reach Out and Read works with medical providers across the greater New York area in advising parents about the importance of reading aloud to their children and provides free books at each check-up for children ages 6 months to 5 years. The books are new, carefully chosen, and developmentally appropriate -- starting with board books for babies and moving on to more complex picture books for preschoolers. Through Reach Out and Read, each child starts kindergarten with a home library of up to 10 books and a parent who has learned through every well-child visit about the importance of books and reading with their children. Additionally, volunteers read stories with children in clinic waiting rooms, thereby modeling for parents reading aloud techniques.

Margaret Levitt, MD, who is a pediatrician and Director of the ROR Program at Sound Shore said, “This year Sound Shore Medical Center is celebrating our 11th Anniversary with the Reach Out and Read Program. Our goal is to distribute beautiful books to our patients and encourage our parents to read to their children. It is a daily pleasure to see a child's smile when a book is given.”

www.reachoutandreadnyc.org

About Reach Out and Read of Greater New York

Sound Shore Medical Center is one of eight program sites in the 18th New York Congressional District that participate in Reach Out and Read, providing books to more than 9,500 children annually. Across the region, 178 Reach Out and Read program sites serve over 266,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers each year and distribute over 390,000 books. For more information about Reach Out and Read of Greater New York visit our website at www.reachoutandreadnyc.org.

About Reach Out and Read

Reach Out and Read is an evidence-based, national nonprofit organization that prepares America's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. Reach Out and Read currently serves one-third of the most impoverished children in the U.S. The Reach Out and Read model is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the program has one of the strongest records of research support of any primary care intervention. This year, Reach Out and Read's 26,500 volunteer doctors and nurse practitioners will provide 6.2 million new books to 3.9 million children at 4,535 healthcare locations in all 50 states. For further information, please visit Reach Out and Read's website at www.reachoutandread.org.

About Sound Shore Medical Center of Westchester

Sound Shore Medical Center (SSMC) is a 252-bed, community-based, teaching hospital located at 16 Guion Place in New Rochelle. Since its founding in 1892, SSMC has served the diverse medical needs of the surrounding community and region. We are a major teaching affiliate of New York Medical College, member of the Sound Shore Health System and Pinnacle Healthcare and accredited by The Joint Commission, the nation's oldest and largest hospital accreditation agency.

We are identified as Centers of Excellence for Bariatric Surgery as well as 1st Trimester Antepartum Screening, and approved by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons for our high-quality, comprehensive cancer programs - a distinction held by only 25% of hospitals treating cancer patients. In addition our Sleep Center is accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. We are designated by New York State as an Area Trauma Center, a Perinatal Hospital with Level 3 maternal and neonatal intensive care services, and Stroke Center.

Sound Shore Medical Center clinical results on heart failure, pneumonia, heart attack, and surgical patients, as reported by the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, reflect our care as better than the New York State and U.S. averages in many measures, and in a number the outcomes rank us in the top 10% of the hospitals in the country. We are home to the Jacee Lynn Cappelli Diabetes Center and the Elaine and Melvin Merians Diabetes Education and Conference Center. Also on our campus is the Schaffer Extended Care Center, which provides 50 beds for short-term rehabilitation patients and 100 for long-term residents.

To learn more about SSMC, visit <http://www.soundshore.org/> or for a Physician Referral, call MDs-LINE (914-637-5473).

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On Monday, July 12, 2010, Congresswoman Lowey reading to children at Sound Shore Medical Center of Westchester Children's Medical Group.

Photo courtesy of: Reach Out and Read of Greater New York

Hi Res JPEG available via email. Contact: Asari Beale at abeale@reachoutandreadnyc.org

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