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**Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. Shares Reading Tips
with Families at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center
*Borough President Reads Aloud to Children in Support of
Reach Out and Read Literacy Program***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – (Bronx, NY) August 19, 2009 -- Doctors at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center are providing families of pediatric patients with free books and a very important prescription – “read aloud to your children.” **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.** paid a visit to Bronx-Lebanon’s Pediatric Outpatient Facility to follow doctors’ orders by reading to families and children who participate in its Reach Out and Read (ROR) early literacy program. As a part of his visit, the Bronx Borough President had the chance to see firsthand how ROR helps instill a love of reading in area children.

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. said “parents need to understand the positive effects of reading aloud to their young children. According to the experts, by reading to your children for at least 20 minutes a day, you help to increase significantly the child’s potential for academic success as well as lifelong success in general. I want to congratulate Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center for being part of the great national program Reach Out and Read (ROR), and I feel very proud of being able to help to spread the message in our borough: Bronxites, Read Aloud to Your Kids.”

ROR 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 ROR, 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.

“At Bronx-Lebanon, thanks to Reach Out and Read, children, from 6 months to 5 years of age, are given unique opportunities to learn by reading, and our doctors, nurses, and support staff are working with them and their families to reinforce the educational process. Reach Out and Read is helping us truly reach a culturally diverse population, giving them a lifeline of hope for future success,” stated Dr. Ram Kairam, Chairman, Department of Pediatrics, Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center.

www.reachoutandreadnyc.org

About Reach Out and Read of Greater New York

Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center is one of 46 program sites in the Bronx that participate in ROR, providing books to more than 67,638 children annually. Across the region, 176 ROR program sites serve over 277,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers each year and distribute over 454,000 books. For more Information about ROR of Greater New York visit our website at www.reachoutandreadnyc.org.

About Reach Out and Read

Reach Out and Read is a national, nonprofit program that is working to make literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care. ROR trains medical providers to advise parents about the importance of reading aloud and to give books to children at check-ups from 6 months to 5 years, with a special emphasis on children growing up in poverty. Endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, ROR has one of the strongest records of research support of any primary care intervention. Peer-reviewed studies indicate that parents who get books and literacy counseling from their doctors and nurses are more likely to read to their young children, read to them more often, and provide more books in the home. Low-income children exposed to the program have shown improvements in language development, a critical component of school readiness.

Since 1989, more than 52,000 pediatricians, nurses, residents and health professionals have been trained in the ROR model of early-literacy promotion. This year, ROR will provide over 6 million books to more than 3.8 million children, at more than 4,500 hospitals and health centers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands. For more information about Reach Out and Read visit www.reachoutandread.org.

About Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center

Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center is the largest teaching and voluntary, not-for-profit health care system serving the South and Central Bronx, with 958 beds at two major hospital divisions; a major psychiatric facility; two specialized long term care facilities; and an extensive "BronxCare" network of 70 medical practices. This BronxCare Network is reinforcing Bronx-Lebanon's essential role as "Doctor to the Community."

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On Thursday, August 19, 2009, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. read to children at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center.

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

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