



**\*\*For Immediate Release\*\***

**Tuesday, April 19, 2016**

**Media Contact:** Anna McGrath

[amcgrath@skdknick.com](mailto:amcgrath@skdknick.com) | (646) 930-1936

## **Building a Culture of Health Citywide**

*Advocate Community Providers' network of local physicians partners with Get Focused youth organization to inspire healthy living in communities facing disproportionate concentration of health challenges*

**New York, NY (April 19, 2016)** – Active kids mean a healthier city. Today Advocate Community Providers (ACP) and Get Focused, two local organizations committed to improving population health citywide, announced a partnership to combat health challenges such as obesity and diabetes, that plague underserved communities.

The joint campaign – **“Get Focused on Reading”** – launches a series of community book fairs across New York’s public school system to empower students to “purchase” their favorite books by completing fitness challenges guided by certified trainers. The free initiative seeks to promote healthy minds and bodies through reading, exercising and eating well.

Get Focused is a nonprofit dedicated to educating youth about the lifelong benefits of healthy living. ACP is a network of 2,000 independent physicians that serves over 650,000 Medicaid patients citywide, particularly Latinos, Asians and African Americans. Today’s launch event at P.S. 239 in Ridgewood, Queens and the continued series will encourage kids and parents to develop the healthy habits needed to improve total community wellbeing.

“Diabetes and obesity are not only serious illnesses that disproportionately affect underserved communities, they are major financial burdens on our health care system,” **said Moisés Pérez-Martínez, Director of Workforce, Community & Government Relations, ACP.** “At a time when the city is working to transform health care delivery to achieve improved care, better health outcomes and reduced costs, innovative initiatives and partnerships such as this are critical to our collective success. ACP is thrilled to partner with Get Focused, and we look forward to the work ahead.”

At the event, students can shop from over 1,000 donated books, while parents can speak directly with local ACP network physicians for any health-related questions.

“As a local physician, I see the detrimental effects that poor health has on our community’s overall health status,” **said Dr. Jesus Pichardo, ACP network pediatrician.** “In order to stop this growing epidemic, we must get to the root of the socioeconomic barriers that perpetuate these health conditions, like access to healthy food and limited exposure to health education.”

ACP and Get Focused are targeting neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of severe health conditions to address the racial and ethnic disparities that many low-income and minority communities



face. Free fruit, beverages and other nutritious options are also available at the on-site “healthy cafés” to introduce healthy diets.

“The purpose of the ‘Get Focused on Reading’ campaign is to instill the power and knowledge of reading, exercise and community service into our youth and catalyze a movement in New York’s most unhealthy neighborhoods,” **said Goldin Martinez, founder of Get Focused.** “Since our establishment in 2009, Get Focused has completed over two dozen free programs and events, impacting nearly 50,000 youth and we are excited to further our impact with the support of Advocate Community Providers.”

ACP and Get Focused will host 12 events in the next three months across New York boroughs.

***For photos from today’s launch event and additional information visit:***

<http://www.acppps.org/getfocused>

###

### **About Advocate Community Providers**

Advocate Community Providers (ACP) unites 2,000 individual, independent physicians with 950 hospital partners and community-based organizations dedicated to health, wellness and social services in lower-income, underserved Hispanic, Asian and African-American communities throughout New York City. Representing over 650,000 patients across four boroughs of New York City, ACP was created in partnership with Northwell Health (formerly North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System). ACP’s mission is to convene safety-net providers, partners and other stakeholders to create a culturally competent patient-centered, comprehensive and coordinated service care model to meet the needs of individuals and families participating in Medicaid. ACP is one of 25 Performing Provider Systems (PPS) in New York’s Delivery Reform Incentive Payment program (DSRIP) to transform the State’s Medicaid system. DSRIP’s goals include reducing avoidable hospitalizations and ensuring that patients and their families with Medicaid switch to a community-based care system that emphasizes preventative care over reliance on the emergency room.

### **About Get Focused**

Get Focused was founded in Washington Heights by Goldin Martinez in 2009. At the time he was only 21 years old, but he had witnessed the toll that obesity, apathy and a low high school graduation rates had taken on his community. Goldin’s vision was to offer free fitness education and leadership training to underserved children in his community.

In its first 90 days, Get Focused grew from one member to more than 150 members. Since then, Get Focused has continued to grow its initiative and provide free programs and events to every underserved community in New York City.

Today, Get Focused, through its free programs in fitness, education and community service, has enriched the lives of thousands of New Yorkers. It remains dedicated to creating innovative, positive solutions to the most pressing social problems affecting our communities. With the help of others, Get Focused will continue to expand its efforts and mission nationwide.