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Healthcare Champions Rita Mabli & Westchester Community Health Center Honored by 250 Power Players at WCA's "Toasting to a Healthy Westchester"

Northwell CEO Michael Dowling Takes Stage as Keynote Speaker:

"We've got to solve the social determinants of healthcare to improve the health status of Americans..."

White Plains, New York - (September 22, 2023)...In his keynote address at WCA's "Toasting to a Healthy Westchester," **Michael J. Dowling, CEO, Northwell Health** appealed to 250 key leaders in healthcare and business attending this annual dinner to try to solve what he called the social determinants of health, such as gun violence, poverty, obesity, and drugs and alcohol abuse. "If we don't solve these issues, we will never improve the health status of Americans," he said, citing the pressures facing the industry today.

In attendance at the packed event, which celebrated the vital healthcare sector in Westchester as well as WCA's transformative work in the industry, were **New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assemblywoman Amy Paulin**, chair of the State Assembly health committee, Deputy County Executive **Ken Jenkins**, and Westchester County Health Commissioner **Dr. Sherlita Amler**. Two healthcare champions were honored: **Rita Mabli**, President & CEO of United Hebrew of New Rochelle, and the Westchester Community Health Center, under the leadership of CEO, **Judith Watson**. It was held at Abigail Kirsch at Tappan Hill on September 20.

Dowling, introduced by **Joe Simone**, President of Simone Development Companies, reflected on the extraordinary successes achieved in the industry while acknowledging the increasing complexities of the healthcare business – spanning the expansion of healthcare delivery in communities, artificial intelligence applications, workforce training, and financial pressures. He outlined the challenges today's healthcare leaders face and urged leaders in the room to take action to meet them. "We have to be very comfortable with ambiguity. We have to be looking long term. There are a lot of issues here, but we do great work and should be very proud of what we do. Every challenge is an opportunity."

Amy Allen, WCA Vice President, provided an update on the WCA's healthcare initiatives, including the work of the WCA's Healthcare Consortium and the organization's partners to build a sustainable regional talent pipeline. Addressing the success of the County and State funded grant programs, Allen noted that "to date, our programs have trained 180 potential healthcare



workers with another 50 in training this fall. Healthcare employers have already hired 90 highly qualified graduates, with the salaries of placed participants at nearly \$3.2 million — an ROI of 10:1. That’s what I would call a good investment.”

WCA President & CEO, **Michael N. Romita** presented the honors with Allen to the WCA Healthcare Champions, Rita Mabli and the Westchester Community Health Center:

- **Rita Mabli** is a nationally recognized leader in senior care, having transformed United Hebrew in New Rochelle over the past 40+ years from a nursing home into an impressive campus of comprehensive eldercare where seniors can thrive. Said Mabli: “It’s rewarding to be in the company of so many dynamic, powerful, diverse, and inspiring people who share similar goals to improve the quality of life for others. But no success happens because of any one person. I am here as a direct result of the support of our incredibly hardworking and compassionate team, a visionary board of directors, and many others with me here tonight. I share this award with them.”
- Under **Judith Watson’s** leadership, the organization formerly known as Mount Vernon Health Center has rebranded itself as the Westchester Community Health Center and is currently undergoing a \$12 million upgrade to its facilities. Now serving 42K patients annually, WCHC is improving access to high-quality healthcare in primarily underserved areas. Watson acknowledged her team and said, “I may be the face of the health center, but there are 300 folks on the ground doing all of the work. The true measure of a society is how we care for our most vulnerable. That’s what we have done at Westchester Community Health Center for the past 50 years and will for years to come.”

Sen. Stewart-Cousins thanked the WCA for its leadership in what she described as extraordinary times. “My leadership is only made workable because of the input of all of you. Thank you for making sure that no matter what, we convene and find time to exchange ideas and collaborate, ensuring what people expect from a healthcare delivery system actually happens in our region.”

Assemblywoman Paulin added: “The health system in New York is still challenged by workforce shortages at every level. We must find creative ways to help. The WCA has been very much at the forefront of addressing these challenges.”

Susan Fox, WCA Board Chair and CEO and President, White Plains Hospital, thanked the membership for ongoing support and extended her congratulations to the evening’s honorees. “I am proud and grateful to call these two women colleagues and friends, each a force in ensuring their communities get only the best care. Both Rita and the Westchester Community Health Center under Judith’s leadership have immeasurable impact on the health of Westchester residents. A well-deserved congratulations to you both.”



About the Westchester County Association

The Westchester County Association is the most influential professional membership organization in Westchester and the surrounding region. We unite professional leaders to advance issues and lead initiatives that strengthen our regional economy. Our mission is to drive Westchester's economic vitality, stimulate new business development and job creation, and provide our members with the resources and talent they need to grow. For more information about the Westchester County Association, visit www.westchester.org.

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