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Buffalo CRITERION



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Buffalo Criterion; WNY's African American Weekly. 50¢

www.thebcn.com/criterion

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24-30, 2009

Miller-Williams Opposes Plans to Cut Primary Health Care Services At City Clinics

Erie County Legislator Barbara Miller-Williams (D-Buffalo, 3rd District) is opposing the reduction of health and medical services offered at two sites in her district due to proposed service cuts in the county executive's 2010 budget plan.

Legislator Miller-Williams expressed deep concern that the county executive's budget proposes to no longer provide primary health care services to her constituents and other county residents at the Jesse E. Nash Health Care Center and Pediatrics, at 608 William Street, and the Dr. Matt Gajewski Human Services Center, at 1500 Broadway, the county's only two remaining health clinics.

The Jesse Nash Health Care Center offers women's health services, family planning (including free family planning services to those who qualify), GYN and prenatal services, dental and mental health services, the latter through Mid-Erie Counseling and Treatment Services, to low-income women and teens. All health insurances are accepted, and free family planning services can be received by anyone meeting income requirements through the Family Planning Benefit Program.

The Dr. Matt Gajewski Human Services Center offers primary care, including adult medicine, pediatrics, podiatry and women's health care services and free family planning services for those who qualify. All health insurances are accepted, and free family

planning services can be received by anyone meeting income requirements through the Family Planning Benefit Program.

The County Executive has proposed to transfer these non-mandated clinical services to the Sheehan Health Network of Buffalo. Legislator Miller-Williams noted that the patients, community and the Ellicott Neighborhood Advisory Council are opposed to this change due to many years of success these centers have had reaching out to thousands of clients living nearby.

"This reduction of health and medical services is targeting those people who are most in need of such services and whose voices need to be heard loud and clear by the administration," Legislator Miller-Williams said. "Senior citizens and people of lower economic status have fewer alternatives for their health care, and this action will further reduce them."

"Senior citizens, who have worked hard their entire lives, are now being told that they have to find a new facility to receive some or all of their medical care, and they will have to find transportation to get them there," Legislator Miller-Williams added. "People have been utilizing the services at these clinics for over 10 years, and should not have this important part of their lives uprooted. The county budget should not be balanced on the backs of the people seeking health care at these clinics. I will fight to keep these services available to the people who need and deserve them."