**BMS Family Health and Wellness Centers**

**Contacts: RENEE MUIR, Cell: 646-326-6179**

[rmuir@bmsfhc.org](about:blank)

**June 23, 2020**

**BMS FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTERS RECIEVES A SUBARU FORESTER FROM THE CHASE AUTO GIVES BACK PROGRAM FOR ITS FRONTLINE COVID-19 RESPONSE IN THE HARD-HIT NEIGHBORHOODS OF BROWNSVILLE AND EAST NEW YORK**

***BMS’ Multi-Pronged Approach of Community COVID-19 Testing, Expansion of Telehealth Services and creation of a Food Safety Net Tackles Critical COVID-19 Health Threats in East Brooklyn, New York***

BROOKLYN, NY – Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health and Wellness Centers (BMS) a Federally Qualified Community Health Center (FQHC) also known as Community Health Center, is part of New York’s safety net providers. BMS’s primary service area includes Brownsville and East New York, two neighborhoods already impacted pre-COVID-19 by significant health and economic disparities. BMS moved quickly to implement a multi-pronged approach to addressing anticipated the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic including Free COVID-19 testing, conversion to Telehealth to ensure ongoing healthcare access, and the build out of a Food Safety Net for patients and area residents.

To help make sure staff has access to transportation to better serve people at their homes Chase Auto donated a Subaru Forester through its Chase Auto Gives Back program. The Forester will help the organization’s outreach efforts, staffing mobilization across BMS sites and food delivery and transportation for its Food Access efforts. Additionally, the firm’s local Brooklyn Market Leadership Team, awarded BMS $50,000 to support its COVID-19 frontline response efforts on the ground including safety equipment for BMS staff, equipment for Telehealth and supplies for the Food Access Safety Net initiative.

"Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center is a phenomenal organization with a community-based mission that is so critical during these times," said Melinda Welsh, Chase Auto CMO and Head of Consumer Programs. "Many of our employees live and work in Brooklyn. We were more than happy to support BMS as they deliver lifesaving services to residents in need."

“BMS’s COVID-19 efforts are extremely important for the Brownsville and East New York Community since our communities of color already faced significant disparities in premature death due to hypertension and diabetes and were left even more vulnerable to COVID-19” said Harvey Lawrence, Chief Executive Officer for BMS Family Health and Wellness Centers. “Support from JPMorgan Chase, helps continued care delivery through supplies of safety equipment for our healthcare workers, resources to transition patients to Telehealth and transportation to move staff across sites as well as delivering food across our community.”

The free COVID-19 Tent Testing takes place in the parking lot adjacent to the BMS Main location on Rockaway Avenue in Brownsville and tests are administered by BMS Staff and Clinician volunteers outside of their regular work duties, with additional staffing from a recent partnership with Doctors Without Borders. To date, BMS conducted over 1,500 tests since opening in the testing site and are seeing positive test results rates of 20% of those tested. BMS also offers high-quality, comprehensive primary and preventive care to anyone to who needs it via Telehealth and in person visits – regardless of whether they have insurance, their immigration status or if they can pay. This includes dental, vision, and behavioral health services – including substance use disorder treatment. The BMS Food Safety Net initiative provides weekly distributions of food bags at nine area locations including New York City Housing Authority Developments, Homeless Shelters and Senior residences. Through donations from City Harvest among others, and in cooperation with members of the Community District 16 Health and Wellness Stakeholders, since March 2020, BMS has distributed over 10,000 food bags to its patients and the community.

Brownsville and East New York exceed the Borough and City rates for Poverty, Unemployment and Rent Burden and the resulting high levels of economic stress impact overall health outcomes with a direct correlation to the neighborhoods’ high rates of chronic disease such as Cancer, Obesity, Diabetes, Hypertension, HIV and Psychiatric Hospitalizations, which exceed both the Borough and City rates. Not surprisingly, both Brownsville​ and East New York are experiencing high COVID-19 infections rates with East New York having the highest mortality rate in New York State.

**ABOUT BMS**

Brownsville Community Development Corporation (BCDC) is a private 501(c) (3) non-profit incorporated in 1974. In 1982, it established the BMS Family Health and Wellness Centers, with just one National Health Services Corps physician. BMS is a Federally Qualified Community Health Center (FQHC) also known as Community Health Center, is part of New York’s safety net providers and has grown dramatically in correlation with the increasing needs of community residents. Today, BMS is a comprehensive Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), offering Primary Care, Dental, Specialists, WIC, and Health Homes, regardless of ability to pay, at nine (9) strategically located, easily accessible service sites, while also implementing Community Wellness programs including a Hydroponic Farm, operating a School Based Health Center at the Thomas Jefferson High School Campus and the founding community partner for one campus school, World Academy for Total Community Health High School.

The BMS COVID-19 Tent testing walk-up testing facility is open Monday to Friday and individuals are seen by appointment only. Those interested in being tested are asked to call the COVID-19 Hotline at (888) 364-3065 to make an appointment during operating hours on Monday through Friday from 9AM – 4PM.

The BMS Family Health and Wellness Centers serves 23,000 patients and an additional 5,000 WIC clients and is the second largest non-governmental employer in Brownsville. For more information please visit: [https://www.bmsfamilyhealth.org/](about:blank), or [https://www.facebook.com/BMSFHC/](about:blank)