

PRESS RELEASE

Office of Councilmember David A. Catania

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 110, Washington, D.C. 20004

For Immediate Release: December 21, 2007

Contact:

Ben Young

(202) 724-7772

byoung@dccouncil.us

<http://www.davidcatania.com>

CATANIA ENDS EXTRAORDINARY 2007

BEGINNING OF COUNCILMEMBER'S THIRD TERM FILLED WITH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Washington, D.C. – 2007 was an extraordinary year for D.C. Councilmember David Catania (At-Large), Chairman of the Council's Committee on Health. When the Council breaks for its annual December recess today, he will have compiled a remarkable list of accomplishments over the past 12 months. These include expansions in healthcare for children, dental benefits for adults, and nurses in the District's public schools. Additionally, Catania's tireless oversight prompted, at long-last, the sale of Greater Southeast Community Hospital in 2007 and prevented its certain closure.

"This has been a great year for healthcare in the District of Columbia," said Catania. "I am very pleased with our progress on this front and am eager to keep moving forward in 2008."

The year began on a positive note when, one day before being sworn-in for his third full term, Catania witnessed the successful implementation of the District's Smoke-Free Workplaces law that he authored. In the ensuing months, he spearheaded successful initiatives to combat cervical cancer, fight asthma, and build capacity among groups working to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. Catania capped off his impressive year when the Council voted to give initial approval to his groundbreaking legislation that would improve the safety of prescription drug marketing in the District.

The list of Catania's 2007 accomplishments includes:

- ✓ **January 2:** The District's Smoke-Free Workplaces law, authored by Catania, was successfully implemented.
- ✓ **January 3:** Catania was sworn-in for his 3rd full term on the Council. He received the highest percentage of votes for a non-Democratic candidate in the city's history.
- ✓ **January 9:** The American Lung Association said that the outlook for reducing tobacco use and tobacco-related illness and death has "never been brighter" in the District of Columbia in its annual "State of Tobacco Control Report." The report highlights the efforts of the Council's Health Committee, including a historic allocation of \$10 million for a comprehensive tobacco control program in the District.

- ✓ **February 1:** The District raised the eligibility for children covered by Medicaid and the D.C. Healthcare Alliance to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Limit, effectively insuring thousands of additional District children. Catania's Health Committee undertook the expansion which made the District a national leader in the area of children's health care.
- ✓ **February 16:** Catania received the "Shirley A. Grant Award for Healthcare Advocacy" from D.C. Action for Children.
- ✓ **March 6:** A federal court upheld key provisions of Catania's "AccessRx Act of 2004." The court's ruling allowed the District to begin implementing the groundbreaking prescription drug legislation.
- ✓ **March 9:** Catania was awarded the Ward 7 HIV/AIDS Collaborative "Community Voice Award" by Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington for his commitment to HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness.
- ✓ **March 19:** Catania was elected Chair of the National Legislative Association for Prescription Drug Prices (NLARx). NLARx consists of legislators from 20 states who are committed to working across state lines to make prescription drugs more affordable and accessible.
- ✓ **April 1:** The District implemented the first-ever dental benefit for 60,000 adult Medicaid recipients. Catania's Health Committee funded the benefit in order to address the negative health implications associated with a lack of proper dental care and the serious shortage of dental care among low-income District residents.
- ✓ **April 19:** The Council approved the "HPV Vaccination and Reporting Act of 2007." The bill created a vaccination program for the Human Papillomavirus, which causes cervical cancer, for females entering the 6th grade in the District of Columbia.
- ✓ **May 3:** The Health Committee approved the annual budget for the Departments of Health and Mental Health. The combined \$2.2 billion budget contained many innovative programs and partnerships initiated by Catania. Notably, the budget included funds to renovate and modernize the District's school nursing suites and to provide a full-time nurse for every public school in the District..
- ✓ **June 30:** The District began full implementation of *AccessRx*. The law was hailed nationally as a ground-breaking initiative at the time of its passage in 2004. The pharmaceutical and PBM industries challenged the law but were unsuccessful at overturning it.
- ✓ **July 10:** The Council unanimously approved the "Student Access to Treatment Emergency Act of 2007," authored by Catania. The law permits District students who suffer from asthma and severe allergies to carry and administer doctor prescribed medication during school hours and at school-sponsored activities
- ✓ **July 10:** The Council approved Catania's "Establishment of Hospital Receivership Emergency Act of 2007." The bill authorized the Mayor to seek an independent receiver to operate Greater Southeast Community Hospital in the event of an emergency.
- ✓ **July 10:** The Council Catania's "Greater Southeast Community Hospital Investigation Emergency Approval Resolution of 2007." The bill granted the Council's Committee on Health

the power to subpoena documents and witnesses in its investigation of Greater Southeast Community Hospital.

- ✓ **September 25:** Catania was awarded the American Cancer Society's "We Can Be Smokefree Award.". Catania authored and won passage of the District's smoking ban in 2005. The final phase of the law was implemented earlier in 2007. Other awardees included Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Congressman Michael Castle (R-DE) for their leadership in the fight against cancer.
- ✓ **October 2:** The Council passed the "East of the River Hospital Revitalization Emergency Amendment Act of 2007," authorizing the use of \$79 million in order to make the sale of Greater Southeast Community Hospital possible. The vote symbolized the largest-ever investment in healthcare east of the Anacostia River
- ✓ **October 12:** Catania was presented the "2007 Exemplary Comprehensive Cancer Control Leadership Award" at a ceremony that included former President George H.W. Bush and Senator Diane Feinstein of California. The awarded was presented by C-Change, which is comprised of the nation's key cancer leaders from the government, business, and nonprofit sectors and is dedicated to facilitating independent and collaborative efforts to combat cancer.
- ✓ **October 23:** The Council voted to unanimously approve a Public/Private Partnership Agreement between the District and Specialty Hospitals of America. The partnership effected the sale of Greater Southeast Community Hospital and, ultimately, prevented the hospital's closure.
- ✓ **October 25:** Catania received the "Distinguished Public Official" award at the District of Columbia Primary Care Association's Tenth Annual Legislative Meeting. Catania was honored for his work on a variety of healthcare issues, as well as for his successful tenure as Chair of the Council's Committee on Health.
- ✓ **November 8:** Catania joined Mayor Fenty and Chancellor Rhee to unveil the first set of renovated school health suites and kick-off the school health initiative. Catania's Health Committee provided the funding for these initiatives in order to address serious deficiencies in the knowledge and awareness of healthy lifestyle choices among District school children.
- ✓ **November 13:** Catania was awarded the American Lung Association's "2007 Life and Breath Award" for his many efforts to combat cancer in the District of Columbia.
- ✓ **December 11:** The Council passed the "Effie Slaughter Barry HIV/AIDS Initiative Act of 2007." The Act, co-authored by Catania, renamed the East of the River HIV/AIDS Initiative and allocated additional funding for capacity building for HIV/AIDS projects East of the Anacostia River.
- ✓ **December 11:** The Council gave initial approval to the "Safe Rx Act of 2007." The Act targets unsafe prescription drug marketing tactics in the District.

###