

Health Care Pros

Her Job: Your Wellness

Minch sits at the helm of a healthcare empire that serves the city

By Carolyn Braff

Overseeing a staff of 500 that provides affordable healthcare to New Yorkers of all ages and income levels requires unfailing dedication. And few are more dedicated to her community than Barbra Minch.

"I have been living on the Upper West Side for 35 years, pre-, pre-, pre-gentrification," Minch said. "I raised my two children here since 1971."

For nearly the entirety of those 35 years, Minch has been involved in some way with the William F. Ryan Community Health Center, a multi-site, nonprofit, federally qualified health center with more than 250,000 ambulatory care visits each year.

"We provide primary preventive and support health services to whoever walks through our doors," said Minch, who has been working at the Ryan Health Center since 1979, when she started as assistant to the executive director.

Since then, Minch worked her way up

to deputy director, becoming president and CEO in 1995. She now oversees 16 satellite sites throughout New York, negotiating contracts for labor and lease agreements and representing the Ryan Center in a range of community, city, state and federal activities.

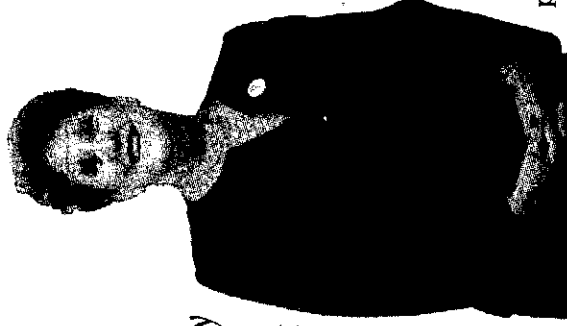
"I can think of no one that has done more for healthcare and, of course, community healthcare than Barbra," said Rep. Charles B. Rangel. "Locally she's known more closely with the Ryan Health Center, but in Washington she's known nationally as a proponent for equality healthcare and access for everyone to have it."

The multilingual and multicultural staff help ensure that Ryan Center constituents—who hail from the Upper West Side all the way up through Washington Heights and Inwood and represent all races, ethnicities and backgrounds—feel comfortable at the Ryan Center and its satellite locations.

"Whenever I want to show a visitor what healthcare is all about in our city, I take them to the Ryan Center," Rangel said. "I don't have to have an appointment because the staff are all professionals. Not only are they personable, but the best proponents of community care are the people that are there. It's made a big difference in how other communities have profiled the same type of center that Barbra has."

Anyone who walks through the doors of the Ryan Center can access a long list of services, ranging from pediatric and radiology to HIV services, nutrition and health education.

"We provide healthcare in particular to the uninsured and underinsured," Minch said. "I'm responsible for assuring that



Barbra Minch started at the Ryan Health Center in 1979 as assistant to the executive director. Today she is the organization's president and CEO.

ANDREW SCHWARTZ PHOTO

we're providing the most cost-effective, high-quality services to the patients we are privileged to serve."

A member of multiple community and professional organizations, Minch's ties to groups like the American Public Health Association, National Association of Community Health Centers and Executive Women in Health have helped her lead the Ryan Center for decades, providing community-based healthcare to the New Yorkers who need it most.

"Community healthcare really makes sense when it's done right," Rangel said, "and they do it right." ■