

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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**Congressman John Sarbanes Visits Reach Out and Read Site
at the Baltimore Medical System at Highlandtown**

BALTIMORE, MD – (October 30, 2008) – Congressman John Sarbanes read to children at the Baltimore Medical System at Highlandtown to celebrate the successful Reach Out and Read Program. At this clinic, and other sites around the city, doctors and nurses send families home from check-ups with free books and a very important prescription – “read aloud to your children.”

Baltimore Medical System at Highlandtown is one of 50 Reach Out and Read sites in Baltimore City. Reach Out and Read is a program that trains medical providers to advise parents about the importance of reading aloud and gives free books to children each well-child visit between the age of six months and five years. The books are new, carefully chosen, and developmentally appropriate. Through Reach Out and Read, each child starts kindergarten with a home library of up to 10 books, and a parent who understands the importance of books and reading.

Baltimore City’s Reach Out and Read sites are coordinated by the Baltimore City Health Department. In Congressman Sarbanes’ 3rd District, 15 sites provide books to almost 10,000 children each year.

Reach Out and Read doctors and nurses distribute 5.4 million books to more than 3.3 million low-income children and their families annually at 3,797 pediatric practices, hospitals, clinics and health centers in all 50 states. Reach Out and Read has one of the strongest records of research support of any primary care intervention. For more than a decade, studies have indicated that parents who receive books and literacy counseling from their doctors and nurses are more likely to read to their young children, read to them more often, and provide more books in the home.

In addition to reading to young patients, Congressman Sarbanes toured the facility and learned, first-hand, of the many ways medical providers are working to build literacy and school readiness in Reach Out and Read program participants.

For more information, visit www.reachoutandread.org or call the Baltimore City Health Department’s Reach Out and Read program at (410) 396-9995.

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