



## **STONY BROOK'S LONG ISLAND GERIATRIC EDUCATION CENTER ESTABLISHES EASTERN LONG ISLAND EXTENSION**

### ***University Expands Effort to Train Healthcare Professionals Caring for Elders on Eastern LI***

A major effort to expand training of health care professionals serving Eastern Long Island's substantial aging population began when Stony Brook University's School of Medicine and Stony Brook University's Health Sciences Center, in cooperation with Eastern Long Island Hospital and the Town of Southold, unveiled their new Eastern Long Island Extension of the Long Island Geriatric Education Center (LIGEC). Details were revealed to key constituents, health care educators and professionals, and community leaders at a formal kick-off ceremony held on April 19 at the Southold Town Human Resources Center in Mattituck. Neal Lane, Director of the NYS Office on Aging was the keynote speaker. He discussed *Project 2015*, which outlines State plans for preparing for the aging population in New York.

The Long Island Geriatric Education Center at Stony Brook - one of only 50 such programs nation wide - was established in January 2002, with a five-year \$850,000 grant by the Bureau of Health Professions in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. Since that time, LIGEC has been providing innovative educational programs for faculty and students of the School of Medicine and the four schools of the Health Sciences-Dental Medicine, Health Technology and Management, Nursing, and Social Welfare. In 2005 the program was also made available to community health care professionals.

"The opening of the East End Extension allows the LIGEC to provide educational outreach to gerontology and geriatric professionals on Eastern Long Island," said Dr. Suzanne Fields, Chief of the Division of Geriatrics and General Internal Medicine at Stony Brook University Hospital and Program Director of the LIGEC at Stony Brook. "This will certainly benefit the existing and pending academic alliances that Stony Brook University Hospital is building with hospitals on the East End of Long Island such as Eastern Long Island Hospital and Peconic Bay Medical Center."

Dr. Fields will coordinate East End Extension activities with Dr. Jay Slotkin, a community geriatrician, Karen McLaughlin, Town Director of Human Services, Southold Town Senior Services, and Paul Connor, III, CEO of Eastern Long Island Hospital.

According to Mr. Connor, "The East End Towns have a much higher percentage of elderly residents than the New York State norm and these communities are currently facing the challenges of an aging population. The rest of Long Island will catch up as baby boomers grow older and health care professionals throughout the region will require geriatric training to be prepared for this demographic shift."