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**For Immediate Release**

## ***Law & Order: SVU* Executive Producer Dr. Neal Baer Honored by Venice Family Clinic with Help from Mariska Hargitay and Ice-T**

*Beverly Hills, CA, February 2, 2010* – Dr. Neal Baer is best known as Executive Producer of the hit NBC series *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, but before his rise to stardom in Hollywood, he was a medical student. It was in this capacity – performing his clinical rotations – that he got involved with Venice Family Clinic, the largest free clinic in the country, fifteen years ago. On Monday evening, at its annual Silver Circle Gala at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, Venice Family Clinic honored Dr. Baer, along with his wife, Gerrie Smith, with the 2010 Irma Colen Leadership Award for their many efforts on behalf of the uninsured and the disadvantaged.

Mariska Hargitay, who plays Detective Olivia Benson on *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, emceed the evening, which also featured appearances by her co-star, Ice-T, and Dr. Baer's cousin, singer-songwriter Jill Sobule.

Dr. Baer's experience at Venice Family Clinic has had a major influence on his work in television over the years, informing many of the storylines on *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* and, previously, on *ER*. In so doing, he has raised public awareness of a multitude of medical issues, included the plight of the uninsured. Besides their involvement with Venice Family Clinic as donors and volunteers, Dr. Baer and Gerrie Smith support numerous humanitarian and community development projects from Los Angeles to Mozambique.

In addition, Venice Family Clinic presented its 2010 Humanitarian Award to longtime supporter Lou Colen, who, along with his late wife, Irma, raised an estimated \$30 million for Venice Family Clinic between 1979 and 2006. Most recently, Colen made a \$1 million gift to name Venice Family Clinic's newest site, the Colen Family Health Center in Mar Vista, which will open in March.

Silver Circle is Venice Family Clinic's premier giving group. For the fourth consecutive year, its members contributed more than \$1 million to Venice Family Clinic, which provides free, quality health care to over 24,400 people in need annually.

Venice Family Clinic's mission is to provide free, quality health care to people in need. Established in 1970 by founder Phillip Rossman, MD, and co-founder Mayer B. Davidson, MD, the Clinic has grown from a small storefront operation into the largest free clinic in the country. With the help of more than 2,000 volunteers, including nearly 500 physicians, Venice Family Clinic provides a medical home for over 24,400 patients through eight sites in Venice, Santa Monica, Mar Vista and Culver City.