

Seize the Hospital to Serve the People: A video interview with activist Cleo Silvers

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Cleo Silvers is an activist and community/labor organizer who has been working in New York City since the 1960s. In this interview, she illustrates her background growing up in Philadelphia and how it led to experiences as a young VISTA volunteer in New York. Although her initial advocacy efforts and organizing began in the South Bronx school systems, Cleo relates how she quickly became fascinated with emerging public health issues in the Bronx and specifically with the poor care given to disadvantaged community members by local hospitals. As a community mental health worker and member of the Black Panther Party and Young Lords, Cleo played key roles in events which led to the 1970 peoples' takeover of Lincoln Hospital (See

Social Medicine, Volume 2, No 2, 2007), one of the most poorly-run city hospitals in the late 1960s. She recounts approaches and specific tactics used by community groups that helped reform the delivery of health care in previously-neglected neighborhoods of the South Bronx. This interview describes the birth of Cleo's long-standing dedication to civil and social justice, and is an important example of how activists and workers can effectively implement change in the social conditions of their communities.

This video can be viewed at:

<http://www.socialmedicine.org/media/>



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