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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York State Division of Human Rights Rejects NAACP Challenge to Sabbath-Closing Clinic
*Division finds “no probable cause” to support discrimination claim against Storzer & Greene client
Ben Gilman Spring Valley Medical & Dental Clinic*

On October 26, 2007, the New York State Division of Human Rights released its “Determination and Order After Investigation” dismissing the NAACP of Spring Valley’s complaint against the Ben Gilman Medical & Dental Clinic and two named individuals. The Division stated:

After investigation, and following opportunity for review of related information and evidence by the named parties, the Division has determined that there is **NO PROBABLE CAUSE** to believe that the respondents have engaged in or are engaging in the unlawful discriminatory practice complained of.

The NAACP chapter originally filed its complaint on August 2, 2006, claiming that the Clinic’s practice of closing on Saturdays to accommodate the Jewish Sabbath was discriminatory. It also challenged the Clinic’s patient assignment between two affiliated clinics.

The Division ordered the complaint dismissed and the file closed.

“This complaint should never have been filed,” said Roman P. Storzer, who represented the Clinic *pro bono*. “The NAACP has done admirable work in pursuit of civil rights. However, religious accommodation benefits, rather than takes away from the laudable goal of diversity in our community.” Storzer & Greene was joined in the defense of the Clinic by The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a Washington D.C.-based non-profit, interfaith law firm dedicated to protecting the free expression of all religions.

The Clinic defended against the charges, stating that New York civil rights laws do not prohibit closing on the Sabbath, and the First Amendment protects the Clinic’s right to do so. “We are very happy with this decision,” said Clinic President Mendel Hoffman. “Now we can close the book on these complaints and work together, serving the community’s medical needs.”

The attorneys of Storzer and Greene, P.L.L.C. have represented scores of churches, temples, mosques and synagogues in religious freedom disputes across the nation, including the Bikur Cholim Shabbos House in Suffern, N.Y., which was denied a variance to provide Orthodox Jews visiting Good Samaritan Hospital with accommodations over the Sabbath. Mr. Storzer has been described by the Religion Newswriters Association as “one of the country’s most experienced litigators” in religious freedom law, and has successfully represented Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Native American, Sikh and other religious organizations in First Amendment cases throughout the nation.

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