



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Coverage for All New Yorkers

A.3020B (Gonzalez-Rojas)/S.2237B (Rivera)

January 8, 2024

The Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS) supports Coverage for All New Yorkers A.3020B (Gonzalez-Rojas)/S.2237B (Rivera) which would expand healthcare coverage to all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status.

CHCANYS is the primary care association for New York's federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), also known as community health centers (CHCs), which serve over 2.3 million patients each year at more than 800 sites across the State. Located in medically underserved areas, CHCs provide comprehensive primary and preventive care to everyone, regardless of insurance status, immigration status, or ability to pay. CHCs serve populations that, historically, have been failed by the traditional health care system: 89% live below 200% of the Federal poverty level, 68% are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), 28% speak limited or no English, 12% are uninsured, more than 4% are unhoused, and 68% are enrolled in Medicaid, CHIP, or are dually enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid.

CHCs are a vital safety net for quality affordable healthcare services for many New Yorkers who otherwise wouldn't have access to healthcare. Because CHCs have robust outreach, enrollment, and navigation services, we suspect that most of the 12% uninsured patients are ineligible for health insurance due to their immigration status. Although CHCs treat everyone regardless of whether they are insured, uninsured individuals experience the most barriers in accessing care outside of CHCs.

Moreover, since spring 2022, more than 157,600 asylum seekers have arrived in New York City, with hundreds more arriving every day. CHCs are already facing extreme financial pressures and now the services they provide to asylum seekers are adding to these pressures, as most of these services are unbillable. CHCANYS surveyed NYS CHCs in September 2023 to better understand the current efforts and challenges in providing care for asylum seekers. According to the survey, CHCs reported that 52.3% of asylum seeker visits were unbillable or will not be claimed for reimbursement. Additionally, CHCs reported only 39.9% of asylum seeker visits would be claimed to Medicaid. This discrepancy in reimbursement will only continue to grow as more care services are provided to the record setting number of asylum seekers arriving in New York. This additional financial stress on CHCs threatens the stability of the safety-net care they provide, as CHCs are already operating on thin margins and outdated Medicaid rates.

CHCs are steadfast in continuing to provide a robust safety net for all populations, including asylum seekers, as they have been for decades. Coverage expansion for all New Yorkers will serve to further enhance and expand access to care.

CHCANYS strongly urges the NYS Legislature to pass A.3020B (Gonzalez-Rojas)/S.2237B (Rivera) to expand healthcare coverage to all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status to build a healthier New York.

For questions, please contact Marie Mongeon, Vice President of Policy at mmongeon@chcanys.org.