

## News Release

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### **New Report Identifies NYC Neighborhoods with Highest Unmet Need for Primary Care Expansion**

#### ***Bronx and Brooklyn have most communities in great need***

Fordham in The Bronx, Corona in Queens, Sunset Park in Brooklyn, East Harlem in Manhattan, and Port Richmond in Staten Island are among the New York City neighborhoods with the greatest need for expanded access to primary care and the ability to support sustainable growth of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), according to a new report released today by the Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS).

The report, *Expanding Sustainable Community Health Centers in New York City*, ranks the primary care need and sustainability of New York City neighborhoods. Building upon the statewide expansion plan developed by CHCANYS in 2013, the report uses a quantitative analysis of communities' relative need for additional FQHC capacity and the feasibility of such expansions.

Authored with financial support from the Office of the Mayor of New York City, the report informed development of the New York City Caring Neighborhoods initiative, a new program launched today that will significantly increase primary care access in underserved areas across the City's five boroughs.

As part of Caring Neighborhoods, \$8 million in operating support grants will be made available through a competitive application process to at least eight FQHCs seeking to expand into the identified high-need areas. A Request for Expressions of Interest was released by the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) on Wednesday.

FQHCs provide quality primary health care in at-risk and medically underserved communities regardless of a patient's ability to pay. In New York State, FQHCs serve 1.8 million patients at more than 600 locations, including 370 sites in New York City.

"CHCANYS has given City officials, through the use of their data collection and analysis tools, a clear roadmap for expansion of FQHCs across the five boroughs," said Elizabeth Swain, CHCANYS President and CEO. "Our updated NYC Expansion Plan identifies New York City's neediest neighborhoods, as well as those best able to support expanded health care services. Ultimately, these efforts will make high-quality primary health care available for all New Yorkers."

"Thanks to our city's hundreds of community health center locations, nearly a million NYC residents have the opportunity to receive the affordable, comprehensive primary and preventative care they need to thrive,"

said Mayor Bill de Blasio. “The City is committed to reducing unacceptable health disparities by increasing access to health care and Expanding Sustainable Health Centers in New York City shows how our City’s community health centers are poised to expand and bring affordable primary care to many more New Yorkers.”

“Investing in strong and vibrant neighborhoods is a key piece of our mission, so we are proud to help bring critical healthcare infrastructure into neighborhoods across the City,” said NYCEDC President Maria Torres-Springer. “The Caring Neighborhoods initiative will bring quality healthcare services to underserved communities in all five boroughs, making our residents healthier and the City a more equitable place for everyone.”

CHCANYS’ new report builds upon its *Plan for Expanding Sustainable Community Health Centers in New York*, developed in 2013 with support from the New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth), which highlights the need for expanded primary care capacity across the state and projects the gains in capacity that could result from enhancing productivity and improving recruitment and retention of health care providers.

“We are proud that our work with CHCANYS has helped to inform the Caring Neighborhoods program,” said James R. Knickman, President and CEO of NYSHealth. “Community health centers are the jewels in the crown of our health system, and this initiative will ensure that more New Yorkers have access to the care and services they provide, in areas of New York City where they are needed most.”

Despite the addition of thirteen new FQHC sites in NYC since CHCANYS’ 2013 Expansion Report was published, primary care capacity shortages still exist, particularly in the medically underserved communities identified in the revised report released today.

New York City has identified the need for additional primary care as a cornerstone to the success of its health care transformation efforts – a priority reflected in the Caring Neighborhoods initiative. New York City-based FQHCs served 972,000 patients last year and the number will exceed 1 million in 2015. Current state and federal health reform efforts emphasize the critical role of primary care in achieving improved delivery system outcomes, and increasing the capacity of FQHCs to meet these demands is essential.

Larry McReynolds, President and CEO of NYU Lutheran Family Health Centers in Brooklyn and Chair of the CHCANYS Board of Directors, said: “Even as Brooklyn grows and changes, the need for accessible primary care in the borough is growing as well. The Community Health Profiles recently released by the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene underscore the high unmet need for accessible primary care in a number of Brooklyn neighborhoods. CHCANYS’ report will serve as an important tool for policymakers who must now decide how best to direct funds in order to address pressing health issues in our borough’s most vulnerable communities.”

Neil Calman, President & CEO of the Institute for Family Health in Manhattan, said: “CHCANYS’ report demonstrates that even in a city with great prosperity, a great many residents live in neighborhoods that lack the primary care capacity necessary to meet their needs. These findings will assist New York in directing resources to the underserved neighborhoods that are often in the shadows.”

Paloma Hernandez, President & CEO of Urban Health Plan in the Bronx and Queens, said: “CHCANYS’ revised expansion plan for New York City shines a bright light on persistent primary care shortages throughout the five boroughs. It will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers as the City seeks to provide increased health care access, to the newly insured as well as to those who remain uninsured.”

Today’s announcement, although focused specifically on primary care shortages in New York City, also serves to highlight efforts at the state level to expand access to collaborative, community-based primary care as a means of reducing health disparities and cutting costs. FQHCs are the backbone of access to care in many communities because they are heavily relied upon by the uninsured, underinsured, and publicly insured—the very population that tends to over utilize hospitals.

Henry Thompson, CEO of the Community Health Center of Richmond in Staten Island, and co-chair of the CHCANYS Public Policy Committee, said: “Enhanced primary care capacity is critical to the success of New York State’s health care delivery system transformation process. CHCANYS’ report highlights New York City neighborhoods with both a demonstrated need for primary care expansion and the necessary attributes to support expanded access to community-based care throughout the transformation process and beyond.”

To access the report and an accompanying interactive map, [click here](#).

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#### **About Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)**

Federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) are not-for-profit, community-based providers that provide high quality, cost-effective, patient-centered primary and preventive health services to anyone seeking care, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. FQHCs are medical homes, offering a comprehensive model of care that is associated with demonstrated improved outcomes and reduced costs. Serving 1.8 million New Yorkers at over 600 sites statewide (including 370 in New York City), New York State’s 65 FQHCs form an extensive primary care network that is central to the health care safety net.

#### **About the Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS)**

CHCANYS’ mission is to ensure that all New Yorkers, including those who live in medically underserved communities, have continuous access to high quality community-based health care services, including a primary care home. CHCANYS serves as the voice of community health centers as leading providers of primary health care in New York State. For more information, visit [www.chcanys.org](http://www.chcanys.org).