

Press Release

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Community Health Care advocates to Albany: You can't do this without us!

ALBANY (Monday, March 7, 2016) – Community-based health care providers who comprise New York's medical safety net came to Albany today with a simple message: The talk about improving the health of New York's communities by directing patients into preventive, primary, community-based care isn't being backed up with the resources to make it happen.

"Policy makers are 100% correct that solutions to our health care challenges lie in getting more people into community-based preventive care. Well, that's us! Now we need Albany to provide the resources so that we can partner in helping making that goal a reality," said Elizabeth H. Swain, President and CEO of CHCANYS.

CHCANYS (Community Health Care Association of New York State) represents the state's network of community-based comprehensive primary health care facilities. They provide comprehensive medical care regardless of a patient's insurance status or ability to pay.

Known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), these 65 facilities across New York State serve some 1.8 million patients at more than 600 sites statewide. FQHCs provide the full range of medical care, including OB-GYN, eye and dental care, behavioral health, and more.

FQHCs must serve an underserved area or population. More than 600 medical professionals, patients, caregivers and administrators participated in today's advocacy day.

"We're here to ask the Governor and the Legislature for funding to cover the cost of caring for uninsured patients, and for meaningful investment in community-based providers to support our state's health care delivery system transformation efforts," said Mary Zelazny, CHCANYS' board chair and CEO of Finger Lakes Community Health.

"This year, FQHCs are experiencing a \$54.4 million gap in annual reimbursement for care for indigent patients. If this shortfall is not filled by Albany, these critically important centers will have no choice but to reduce staff, eliminate expansion plans and/or limit clinic hours," CHCANYS' Senior Policy Director Beverly Grossman said.

"This will result in New York's most vulnerable people losing access to primary care at a time when New York State is actually seeking to *expand* access to primary care services,

as well as reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and improve health outcomes,” Ms. Grossman said.

For more information about Community Health Center Grassroots Advocacy Day, [click here](#).

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About Federally Qualified Health Centers:

Federally qualified health centers (FQHC) 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, 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.