

Press Release

Contact: Kate Graetzer, kgraetzer@chcanys.org
Tel: (518) 434-1115 / Mobile: (518) 312-8132

Community Health Care Advocates Push Washington to Continue Investment in High-Quality Primary Care for New Yorkers

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Nearly 150 community-based health care providers from across New York State will visit their members of Congress in Washington, D.C. on Thursday to urge them to extend vital funding for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC). They will also remind New York's congressional delegation that a strong Medicaid program is vital to providing primary community health care to keep New York's most vulnerable patients healthier and out of more costly healthcare settings.

The New York providers, all members of the Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS), are seeking a minimum five-year renewal of the \$3.6 billion Health Centers Fund, currently scheduled to expire at the end of September, and continuation of \$1.5 billion in federal discretionary funding in FY 2018. The Health Centers Fund accounts for 70 percent of health centers' federal funding. Unless Congress acts to renew it before September 30, health centers may be forced to close sites and lay off providers and staff. This will result in a loss of access to primary and preventive care for millions of New Yorkers.

"We are New York's primary care safety net, working on the front lines every day to increase and improve primary and preventative health care for New York's most vulnerable populations – uninsured, underinsured, poor, homeless, and many others in need of primary health care services," said **Lisa Perry, Interim President and CEO of CHCANYS.**

"Our services are what help keep people out of emergency rooms., Our patients' Medicaid costs are 24 percent lower than patients served in other settings. We save the system money and provide extraordinary health care services. Every health center in New York State will be adversely impacted if this funding cut occurs. Continued bipartisan support is critical to our ability not only to maintain current programs, but to expand our reach to areas of New York State that currently do not have adequate primary care capacity," Perry said.

CHCANYS represents the state's network of community-based primary care facilities, which provide comprehensive primary and preventative care regardless of a patient's insurance status or ability to pay.

Known as FQHCs, these 68 facilities across New York State serve two million patients at more than 650 sites. FQHCs provide the full range of medical care, including primary care, OB-GYN, eye and dental care, behavioral health, and more. FQHCs must serve an underserved area or population.

They will visit Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, as well as all 27 members of New York's delegation in the House of Representatives.

"FQHCs have enjoyed overwhelming bipartisan support from Congress for more than 50 years, which has been essential to our ability to care for New York's most vulnerable residents," said **Mary Zelazny, Chair of the CHCANYS Board of Directors and CEO of Finger Lakes Community Health.** "We are here today to say thank you, but also to ask for continued support as we work to both secure and strengthen access to high-quality, comprehensive health care in the communities where it is most needed."

For more information about CHCANYS, visit www.chcanys.org.

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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 2 million New Yorkers at over 650 sites statewide, New York State's 68 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.