



## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

### Coverage for All New Yorkers

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The Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS) urges the New York State Legislature to protect and care for all New Yorkers by creating a state-funded Essential Plan that would provide healthcare coverage for individuals who are currently excluded due to their immigration status.

CHCANYS is the statewide association of New York's 70+ federally qualified health centers (FQHC), also known as community health centers (CHCs). CHCs are located in medically underserved areas throughout NYS and provide a full range of primary and preventive health care and enabling services for more than 2.1 million patients at over 800 sites.

Located in low-income and medically underserved communities, CHCs provide crucial primary and preventative care to anyone who requires services, regardless of insurance status, immigration status, or ability to pay. In fact, 13% of CHC patients are uninsured. Because CHCs have robust outreach, enrollment, and navigation services, we suspect that most of those individuals 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.

There are currently 154,000 low-income New Yorkers statewide who are excluded from accessing health insurance due to their immigration status. It is unconscionable that, even though immigrants make up 54% of essential workers in New York and 70% of New York's undocumented labor force work in essential businesses, they are unable to access affordable healthcare.

Moreover, people who are uninsured are more likely to receive an initial diagnosis in the advanced stages of a disease or live with unmanaged chronic conditions. According to Families USA, more than 8,200 New Yorkers died from COVID-19 because they lacked health insurance coverage.<sup>1</sup> The connection is clear – by failing to provide meaningful ongoing access to affordable health services through coverage, the state is not only exacerbating the COVID-19 crisis but also existing health disparities.

CHCANYS supports providing healthcare coverage for all New Yorkers by creating a health insurance option for undocumented New Yorkers. We urge the New York State Legislature to include coverage expansion for undocumented immigrants in their one house budgets so that every New Yorker can have access to the care they need to live a healthy life. For more information, please contact Marie Mongeon, Senior Director of Policy at [mmongeon@chcanys.org](mailto:mmongeon@chcanys.org).

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<sup>1</sup> Families USA. March 2021. "The Catastrophic Cost of Uninsurance: COVID-19 Cases and Deaths Closely Tied to America's Health Coverage Gaps." Available here: [https://familiesusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/COV-2021-64\\_Loss-of-Lives-Report\\_Report\\_v2\\_4-20-21.pdf](https://familiesusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/COV-2021-64_Loss-of-Lives-Report_Report_v2_4-20-21.pdf)