



## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

### Add Dentists to DANY

A.1454 (Aubry)/S.4334 (Sepulveda)

April 21, 2023

**The Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS) strongly urges the New York State Legislature to swiftly enact A.1454 (Aubry)/S.4334 (Sepulveda).** This legislation would expand the Doctors Across New York (DANY) program to include dentists.

CHCANYS is the primary care association for New York's federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), also known as community health centers (CHCs), which serve more than 2.3 million patients each year at 800 sites across the State. Operating in medically underserved areas, CHCs provide comprehensive primary, preventive care, and wraparound services to everyone, regardless of insurance status, immigration status, or ability to pay. Among our patients, 89% are low income, 68% are Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and other people of color, 13% are uninsured, and 59% are enrolled in Medicaid or Child Health Plus.

In medically underserved communities, CHCs are often the only source of affordable and accessible dental care. However, CHCs are unable to keep up with the rising demand for dental services due to dental workforce shortages and inability to compete with private practices for a limited pool of dental providers. The scarcity of dental providers disproportionately impacts low-income New Yorkers and people of color, who utilize less dental care than the rest of the population in part due to the limited availability of dental services.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that 1 in 5 people in all age groups have an untreated dental issue, which can have serious impacts on patient health and quality of life.<sup>1</sup> For example, dental disease is correlated with being at higher risk for chronic diseases, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.<sup>2</sup>

DANY is a workforce program that helps train and place physicians in underserved communities by providing loan repayment grants of up to \$120,000 if the provider commits to a minimum of three years of service.<sup>3</sup> Expanding DANY to include dentists will advance the program's goals of ensuring patients in underserved areas have more equitable access to essential health care services. It will incentivize dental school graduates who are burdened by student debt to practice in underserved areas. In 2022, over 65% of new dentists began their careers owing \$293,900 or more in loans.<sup>4</sup> This financial burden disincentivizes new dentists to work in underserved areas where they are expected to earn less.

Comprehensive health and well-being cannot be achieved without oral health, and this legislation would improve New York's health care system by increasing access to this critical workforce. Therefore, **CHCANYS strongly urges the New York State Legislature to pass A.1454/S.4334 to expand DANY to include dentists and thereby increase access to dental services in underserved areas across NYS.**

For more information, contact Marie Mongeon, Vice President of Policy: [mmongeon@chcanys.org](mailto:mmongeon@chcanys.org).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4765973/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31560644/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/doctors/graduate\\_medical\\_education/doctors\\_across\\_ny/](https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/doctors/graduate_medical_education/doctors_across_ny/)

<sup>4</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36199204/>