



January 8, 2020

Dear Members of the NYS Assembly and Senate,

As advocates for a just and equitable healthcare system for all, **we are calling for bold action in the 2020 state legislative session.**

While the legislature is grappling with a healthcare budget shortfall, it's the residents of New York State who ultimately pay for an unfair and inefficient healthcare system. As we prepare for 2020, we support the following measures to bring guaranteed coverage and affordability in healthcare for all New Yorkers:

- **Pass the New York Health Act:** The New York Health Act (**Gottfried A5248/Rivera S3577**) remains the one piece of legislation that will provide coverage for all residents of New York, while simultaneously lowering total healthcare costs for most individuals and for the state. NYHA is explicitly written to cover all residents, so immigrants currently barred from accessing health insurance would be covered. In 2018, a RAND Corporation study affirmed that NYHA could cover everyone with expanded benefits including long-term care and support services, and still cost less in total healthcare dollars than the status quo. The NYHA should be passed immediately in order to launch the implementation process to achieve our goals of universal, comprehensive and affordable coverage.

Passing the New York Health Act in 2020 will start the multi-year process of establishing a universal, single-payer healthcare program. In the meantime, important steps must be taken in this legislative session to expand coverage and address affordability barriers for residents who need relief in the interim:

- **Adopt S.3900/A.5974**, sponsored by Assembly Member Gottfried and Senator Rivera, which **creates a state-funded Essential Plan for immigrants who are ineligible for existing coverage.** This program would be offered to the 246,000 unauthorized immigrants below 200% of the federal poverty level and would cost \$532 million.
 - **Make coverage more affordable for people.** There are two methods to achieve this goal. The first would be to offer a **state-funded Essential Plan to approximately 120,000 people between 200% and 250% of the federal poverty level.** This would cost around \$132 million in the first year. The second option would be to **establish—as California has— additional state subsidies for people between 200% and 400% of the federal poverty level.** This option would make coverage more affordable for approximately 155,000 New Yorkers and cost anywhere between \$250 million and \$530 million, depending on the generosity of the subsidies.
 - **Support more community-based outreach and enrollment assistance to engage the hard-to-reach eligible but uninsured.** New York's current Navigator program is funded at \$27.2 million. But these community-based Navigators haven't had a pay raise, or cost-of-living increase, in over six years. The Legislature should supplement these funds, with an extra emphasis on communities that have a disproportionate percentage of the remaining uninsured.
 - **Protect New Yorkers from unfair medical billing practices.** S6757/A8639 would eliminate some of these practices by requiring consolidated, clear hospital bills, shorten the time patients can be sued, and capping interest on medical debt to 3 percent. It would also protect consumers from surprise out-of-network bills caused by provider or plan misinformation; protect patients from unfair facility fees; and improve hospital financial assistance for uninsured patients.
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- **Reject austerity.** The state must **keep the Medicaid promise and reject harmful cuts that deny coverage or prevent access to care.** State leaders should reorient away from an austerity framework, so that the above health care programs can be fully-funded. Doing so will require creating new sources of revenue that restore progressivity to our state's taxing programs to assure that New York is a just state in which to live and work. The state should also reject the annual growth cap on spending which has unnecessarily starved programs and state agencies of adequate resources to succeed.

The organizations signed below are committed to making healthcare justice a reality through these demands in 2020. We encourage legislators to take the pledge with us, and you can find it online at tinyurl.com/pledge2020. For more information, please reach out to Max Hadler (mhadler@nyc.org) at Coverage4All or Katie Robbins (katie@nyhcampaign.org) at Campaign for New York Health.

Sincerely,

Campaign for NY Health • Coverage for All • Healthcare for All New York (HCFANY)

Academy of Medical & Public Health Services (AMPHS) • ACT UP/NY • Action Together Long Island (ATLI) • Adhikaar • Adirondack Voters for Change • African Services Committee (ASC) • Arab American Family Support Center • Arts for Peace of Ulster County • Barack Obama Democratic Club of Upper Manhattan • Brooklyn-Queens Long Island Area Health Education Center • Broome-Tioga Green Party • BWICA Educational Fund, Inc. • Callen-Lorde Community Health Center • Capital District Alliance for Universal Health Care • Capital District DSA • Care Packages for the Homeless • Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY • Children's Defense Fund-New York • Chinese - American Planning Council (CPC) • Chinese Progressive Association • Citizen Action of New York • Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) • Coalition for Economic Justice (CEJ) • Cobblestone Valley Farm • College Democrats of New York • Commission on the Public's Health System • Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS) • Community Healthcare Network • Community Health Worker Network of Buffalo • Community Service Society of New York • Concerned Citizens For Change • Disabled in Action of Greater Syracuse Inc. • Dsi International Inc • Dutchess County Progressive Action Alliance • East Harlem Health Outreach Partnership • Emerald Isle Immigration Center • Empire Justice Center • Empire State Indivisible • Finger Lakes 4 New York Health • Finger Lakes Community Health • Finger Lakes Rapid Response Network • Forestdale, Inc. • Fort Greene Strategic Neighborhood Action Partnership • Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research (FIAR) • FPA (Formerly the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies) • Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York (GAPIMNY) • Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) • Geneva Women's Assembly • Grassroots Action NY • Gray Panthers NYC • Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition • HANAC, Inc. • Hand-in-Hand: The Network of Domestic Employers • Harlem/Upper West Side for Bernie • Healthcare Equity Action League of New York (HEAL-NY) • Housing Works • Hudson Valley Chapter of the Campaign for New York Health • The Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group (HCMSG) • Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley • Indivisible Harlem • Indivisible Mohawk Valley • Indivisible Nation BK • Indivisible Project • Ithaca Democratic Socialists of America • JFREJ-NYC (Jews for Racial and Economic Justice) • The Korean American Family Service Center • The Korean Community Services of Metropolitan NY, Inc • Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS • Latino Commission on AIDS • League of Women Voters of St. Lawrence County • Leatherstocking Young Farmers Coalition • The Legal Aid Society • The LGBT Community Center • L.I. Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival • Local 930 UAW • Long Island Activists • Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc. • Maison Charles Cleaners • Make the Road New York • ME Action - New York Chapter • Medicaid Matters NY • Mekong NYC • Metro Justice • Metro New York Health Care for All • MinKwon Center for Community Action • Nassau DSA Healthcare Working Group • National Alliance on Mental Illness of NYC (NAMI NYC) • New York 2nd District Democrats • New York Caring Majority • NYC-Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) • NYCD16 Indivisible • New York Doctors • New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) • New York Indivisible • New York State Academy of Family Physicians • New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc. • North Country Access to Health Care Committee • Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition • Northwest Bronx Indivisible • North Forkers for the Common Good • NYPAN • NYPAN Greene • NYPAN - LIA • New York State Labor-Religion Coalition • New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) • Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson • Peace Action of Staten Island • PEER/Progressive East End Reformers • Physicians for a National Health Program - NY Metro Chapter • Polonians Organized to Minister to Our Community, Inc. (POMOC) • Power of 3 • Putnam Progressives • Progressive Doctors • PSL-Geneva, NY • Rockland Citizens Action Network • Roxbury Wine and Spirits • Sakhi for South Asian Women • Sarah Lawrence College Democrats • Saratoga Health Committee - Saratoga Progressive Action • Saratoga Immigration Coalition • Show Up LI • South Asian Council for Social Services • South Central Brooklyn United for Progress (formerly NYSD17 for Progress) • Stronger Together Western New York • Students for a National Health Plan (SNAHP) - New York State • Suffolk Progressives • Syracuse Peace Council • Together We Will Long Island • Tompkins County Immigrant Rights Coalition • Transonic Systems Inc. • Treatment Action Group • True Blue NY • UnLocal, Inc. • Uplift Syracuse • Upper West Side Action • Uptown Progressive Action, a NYPAN chapter • WNY Healthcare for All • Western New York Council on Occupational Safety & Health • Women of Reform Judaism of Riverdale Temple •
