



2022 Joint Legislative Budget Hearing

Health

February 7, 2022

Testimony of Jonathan Suh, Project Coordinator The Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc. (KCS)

Good afternoon, members of the New York State (NYS) Legislature. My name is Jonathan Suh and I am a project coordinator at the Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc (KCS).

Since its founding in 1973, KCS is a non-profit organization in New York whose goal is to help the Korean American population as well as the larger immigrant community by offering a wide variety of services such as Public Health, Mental Health, Immigration, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Daycare for the seniors.

I had the privilege of working with undocumented clients since September of 2021. Unfortunately, these were people that were excluded from health care coverage because of their lack of immigration status. Through working with these clients, I learned about the importance of the Coverage4All (C4A) campaign as well as the frustration and desire of the clients to apply for any possible benefits that exist. Coverage4All is a campaign that works to expand health care coverage so that all New Yorkers can become eligible for health care regardless of their immigration status. Because the clients that I worked with were not eligible for health insurance, I had to help them apply for a program called NYC Care. NYC Care, a discount program only available at H+H Hospitals, is a program that makes medical services more affordable and more accessible for people that are undocumented. This program is extremely crucial for people that do not qualify for insurance of any kind due to their lack of status. It is because of programs like NYC Care that people can receive medical care if they are not eligible to apply for health insurance.

The program activities for NYC Care were for the most part, outreach, and meeting with the clients to help them apply for NYC Care over the phone. During November and December of 2021, for example, we were able to reach out to approximately 2,172 individuals, screened 181 people, and helped 26 people apply for the program through direct enrollment. Based on my experience in assisting people through this program, most people I interacted with were very hesitant to apply for NYC Care because of their status or simply because they did not know what it was. The undocumented population was pretty much unaware that such a program existed and therefore, did not seem interested to know more about the benefits that they could potentially be eligible for. The Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc knows the importance of NYC Care and feels that there is a strong need to reach out to a larger scope of people in New York so that we can bring more awareness of this program.

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An example of a client case that I worked on is a client named Mrs. Park. Mrs. Park is an undocumented client who needed medical attention as soon as possible but was unable to go to the hospital because she did not qualify for insurance. She was having issues with her throat, coughing up blood regularly, and had trouble swallowing food. The client contacted me and asked if there were any health care benefits she could apply for. I assisted in helping her apply to NYC Care and Emergency Medicaid. Through NYC Care, as well as Emergency Medicaid, she was able to go to an H+H hospital to receive the medical attention that she needed. Project coordinators like myself at KCS, help clients like Mrs. Park to enroll into NYC Care and Emergency Medicaid so that they can receive health care access when they previously were unable to.

Through the funding we receive, the Korean Community Services can continue to reach out to undocumented individuals, bring awareness to these programs by handing out brochures and posters, and help them apply for programs that make health services more accessible to them. We, The Korean Community Services, urge the NYS Legislature to continue to fund the program so that we can reach out to a larger population and assist clients like Mrs. Park.

We sincerely thank the NYS Legislature for funding and supporting KCS and other community-based organizations and would like to ask that you continue to do so in the future. We would not be able to help our communities if we did not have your support.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our story.

Jonathan Suh
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