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Community Health Center's Volunteer Medical Team Deploying to Puerto Rico as Part of New York State's Relief Efforts

The Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS), in partnership with Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, announced today that a volunteer medical team will be deployed to Puerto Rico to provide critical medical relief to residents of the island in the wake of the damage caused by Hurricane Maria. The seven-member team is part of a larger group of volunteer medical professionals being deployed as part of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Empire State Relief and Recovery Effort for Puerto Rico, and in response to a request for assistance from Puerto Rico's Governor Ricardo Rosselló.

Hurricane Maria caused significant damage to Puerto Rico's health care infrastructure, leaving the island's 20 community health centers, 67 hospitals, and the medical personnel who support those facilities challenged to respond to the medical needs of the island's residents. New York's community health centers are well-positioned to provide much-needed assistance and are proud to support the relief efforts. The seven-member team, comprising volunteers from Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, includes physicians, registered nurses and nurse practitioners and is expected to be on the ground for two weeks.

"We're honored to be able to participate in these efforts to provide critically needed medical assistance to those who are suffering in the wake of Hurricane Maria," said Wendy Stark, Executive Director of Callen-Lorde Community Health Center. "Many of our own staff have family, friends and other colleagues who have been affected, and I am so personally moved by and deeply grateful for everyone's eagerness to jump into what will surely be a very, very difficult two weeks to reach people who are in dire need of assistance."

"New York's community health centers are a vital source of primary care throughout the State, and even more so in an emergency," said Rose Duhan, President and CEO of the Community Health Care Association of New York State. "CHCANYS is honored to participate in the Governor's Empire State Relief and Recovery Effort for Puerto Rico and to work with health

care partners statewide to ensure that the residents of Puerto Rico have access to much-needed primary and emergency care. We commend the providers from Callen-Lorde Community Health Center who have volunteered their time and expertise to assist with this effort.”

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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.

About Callen-Lorde Community Health Center: Callen-Lorde is the global leader in LGBTQ healthcare. Since the days of Stonewall, Callen-Lorde has been transforming lives by providing a welcoming environment for LGBTQ communities to get quality care, free of judgment and regardless of ability to pay. The first LGBTQ centric healthcare provider, Callen-Lorde is widely recognized for its innovative HIV and transgender care. They continuously pioneer research, advocacy and education to drive positive change – not just for their patients – but for all LGBTQ people around the world, because Callen-Lorde believes healthcare is a human right. For more information about Callen-Lorde and its research and programs, visit www.callen-lorde.org, or contact Donnie Roberts, Senior Director of Development & Communications at droboterts@callen-lorde.org.

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 2.2 million New Yorkers at 700 sites statewide, New York State’s 68 FQHCs form an extensive primary care network that is central to the health care safety net.