



## **The Affordable Care Act (ACA) and its Impact on Federally Qualified Health Centers**

### **Investment in Expanding Access to Primary Care**

Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), also known as community health centers, make up the largest national network of primary care providers. Most health center patients have low incomes, are uninsured or publicly insured, and are members of racial/ethnic minority groups.

Community health centers serve 1.6 million New Yorkers annually and are central to New York's health care safety net. Two-thirds of FQHC patients are below the poverty level; one-quarter are best served in a language other than English; three-fourths are racial and ethnic minorities; and one-quarter are uninsured. Additionally, nearly 100,000 FQHC patients are homeless, and a similar number are elderly. FQHCs are uniquely situated to serve these populations, providing a model of care which is well integrated with affiliated specialty and hospital partners in communities all over New York State.

- The ACA health reform package included a total of \$11 billion in new, dedicated funding for the Health Centers program over five years (expires at the end FY2015).
  - \$9.5 billion for expansion of the Health Centers program;
  - \$1.5 billion to help current FQHCs expand and improve existing facilities as well as construct new sites.
- The health reform package also included \$1.5 billion for the National Health Service Corps to place an additional 15,000 primary care providers in communities that need physicians.
- FQHC patient volume has grown by 36% in New York City and 31% statewide in the past 5 years. In 2012, 1.6 million New Yorkers received 5.3 million medical visits, over 900,000 dental visits, over 500,000 mental health visits and about 380,000 "enabling services" visits at FQHCs. This expansion is largely due to the additional resources provided under the ACA.

### **Medicaid Expansion**

- New York State has elected to adopt the ACA's Medicaid Expansion provision, which expands coverage to individuals up to 138% FPL.

- In New York State, an estimated 90,000 individuals will become newly eligible for Medicaid as a result of this expansion. Many of these patients are already served by FQHCs; now, health centers will be compensated for the services provided.

#### **NY State of Health: Health Plan Marketplace**

- Since the launch of the NY State of Health marketplace on October 1, nearly 174,000 New Yorkers have completed the full application process and have been determined eligible for health insurance plans, and over 37,000 New Yorkers have fully enrolled in health insurance plans.
- The State is relying heavily upon FQHCs to be the front line for educating the uninsured about the Marketplace and helping them to use it. To date, one staff member from each FQHC in New York State has had the opportunity to participate in state training for Certified Application Counselors. Additional training sessions for FQHC staff will take place later this month.