



Ensure Access to Care for the Uninsured: Protect the Diagnostic and Treatment Center Indigent Care Pool

Policy Request

To ensure that the most vulnerable patients are able to access care, we urge the Legislature to:

Maintain the Executive Budget's proposed \$54.4 million for the Diagnostic and Treatment Center (D&TC) Indigent Care Pool.

Background

The Diagnostic and Treatment Center (D&TC) Indigent Care Pool provides funding to health centers for services provided to uninsured patients. Federally Qualified Health Centers are **New York State's primary care safety net**, but they are **buckling under the burden of providing care for the uninsured** because of the low reimbursement they receive for serving these patients. According to our mission and our mandate, **community health centers are only located in designated underserved communities**, and they provide access to primary and preventive health care regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

Though we try hard to ensure that people are enrolled in health insurance plans if they are eligible, **26% of health center patients are uninsured**; at some centers, more than 50% of all patients are uninsured.

Community health centers serve those most in need. Their patients are more likely to be on Medicaid, uninsured, living in poverty, and Black or Hispanic than the state's total population.

Community Health centers are affordable and open to everyone. Uninsured patients pay according to a sliding fee schedule based on income and family size.

The D&TC Indigent Care Pool uses a simple, transparent formula to assess uncompensated care need. Put simply, the "need" is calculated by multiplying the number of "self-pay" or uninsured visits times that facility's Medicaid rate. From that amount, the amount that the facility received to offset the visits (i.e. if the patients paid anything for the visit) is subtracted to come up with a nominal figure representing "need" or losses. **The more uninsured care a center provides, the greater proportion of the pool the center receives.**