

News Release

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New York’s Community Health Care Providers to Legislature: “Resources Must Follow Rhetoric”

New York State won’t meet its ambitious health care transformation goals – arguably the administration’s top health care policy priority – unless it begins to focus more resources on community-based providers and specifically safety net providers working in underserved and high-poverty areas, advocates told state lawmakers today.

“The financial resources have not followed the rhetoric,” said Elizabeth Swain, President and CEO of the Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS), which represents more than 60 federally qualified community health centers (FQHC) located in medically underserved areas statewide. “New York State is relying on the work of community-based health care providers to transform the state’s healthcare delivery system, yet it has not made any equitable investment in the sector to support it.”

“CHCANYS supports New York’s efforts to transform the healthcare delivery system and is pleased that the state has recognized the importance of expanding access to comprehensive, community based care. But meaningful, sustainable delivery system transformation will only be achieved if the state provides appropriate financial investment directly to the community healthcare providers whose work is at the center of its reimagined care delivery system,” Ms. Swain said.

New York State has embarked on an effort to reduce avoidable hospital use by 25% over five years. The effort relies upon thoughtful collaboration between large hospital networks and the community-based health organizations that serve the vulnerable populations more statistically likely to visit emergency rooms for treatment of chronic health conditions.

FQHCs serve 1.8 million New Yorkers annually, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay, in inner cities and medically underserved areas. In 2014, 86% of patients were at or near the poverty level, 55% received Medicaid, and 18% were uninsured. One quarter of New York’s FQHC patients are best served in a language other than English, and three-fourths are racial and/or ethnic minorities. In short, FQHCs are New York’s primary care safety net providers.

In order to participate in initiatives like the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program, these smaller, community-based safety net providers must be able to cover the costs associated expansions and other investments necessary to ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered primary care. Yet despite the Administration's stated reliance on the community-based health care provider sector in achieving its goal, it has yet to provide any dedicated funding streams in support of these needs, according to CHCANYS' Senior Policy Director Beverly Grossman, who presented testimony at today's joint legislative hearing on the health and Medicaid sections of the 2016-17 Executive Budget proposal.

In addition to inequitable access to transformation dollars, community-based providers are this year facing a number of "hidden" cuts that could potentially undermine their ability to maintain current staffing levels and cover day-to-day expenses, she said. These include a \$54.4 million deficit in indigent care reimbursement, lack of access to capital dollars to help FQHCs improve technology and facilities, no state assistance to address salary inequities created by the state's anticipate minimum wage requirement already in place for fast-food and state workers, and potentially lost reimbursements stemming from the Health Republic collapse.

"[These cuts] will impact the ability of community healthcare providers, including FQHCs, to continue to provide high-quality, comprehensive community-based primary care, a signature component of New York's wide-ranging healthcare delivery system and payment reform initiatives," said Ms. Grossman. "It is critical that the State make funds available to support their ongoing participation and needed partnerships within current transformation efforts."

Ms. Grossman's full testimony may be accessed [here](#).

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. For more information, visit www.chcanys.org.

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