



Momentum for House Our Future NY Grows

With the number of people experiencing homelessness continuing to rise each year, there is an urgent need to advocate for policies that can put us on the path towards ending homelessness.

For the past year, Care for the Homeless and 63 ally organizations, led by Coalition for the Homeless, have been advocating for the House Our Future NY (HOFNY) campaign asking Mayor Bill de Blasio to increase the construction of affordable housing units available for homeless New Yorkers. The campaign addresses Mayor



Source: Coalition for the Homeless

De Blasio's Housing New York Plan 2.0, which promises to create 300,000 units of affordable housing. Currently the plan only commits 15,000 units of affordable housing to people experiencing homelessness, most of which will come from the preservation of already occupied units. HOFNY calls for an increase to 30,000 units to be reserved for homeless New Yorkers, (or 10% of the overall plan) that would include 24,000 move-in ready units. Targeting newly created units means families and individuals would be able to immediately move from shelter into permanent affordable housing, essentially cutting the current DHS shelter census by at least half.

Thanks to the collective advocacy efforts of the campaign members and hundreds of allies, there have been several wins in the last few months providing a great deal of momentum to continue pushing HOFNY before the adoption of the NYC FY20 Budget. In October of last year HOFNY marched to Gracie Mansion joined by 300+ advocates in support of the campaign. That same month Councilmember Salamanca introduced a bill (Intro 1211) that would require developers who receive City financial assistance, for housing preservation and new construction, to set aside at least 15 % of the units in each project for homeless individuals and families. In December the campaign led a teach in at City Hall accompanied by Councilmember Salamanca and dozens of supporters as well as a vigil led by faith leaders. And, at the end of January City Council Intro 1211 reached a veto proof majority of 35 Council members. This is a big win for HOFNY as this legislation would provide the practical tools to help reach the overall goal of 24,000 move in ready units.

There is still more to be done, and that includes getting the Mayor on board with what would be decisive strategy to combat homelessness. A recent NYC Independent Budget Office report comparing the affordability levels of the Mayor's housing plan with neighborhood incomes found that the from June 2014- June 2018 thirty nine percent of the units financed under the Mayor's housing plan were set aside for extremely low income or very low income households (meaning up to 50% of AMI or \$31,750 for a 1 person household) exceeding the goal of 26%. However, only about 30% of those units are new construction projects which further questions how effective the affordable housing plan can be in increasing the availability of housing for those most in need. Fifty-nine organizations, 38 Council Members, the Public Advocate, the City Comptroller, four Borough Presidents and thousands of advocates and grass roots supporters believe that committing 30,000 units to people experiencing homelessness, including 24,000 new construction units, would align the affordable housing plan with the reality of record homelessness.

That's why our clients, advocates and supporters will continue fighting for this campaign to get the Mayor on board with the HOFNY ask. It's the right thing to do, and over time it would save New York City an enormous amount of public resources. We want you to get involved, please join us today, Thursday, March 7th for a Town Hall to learn more about the campaign, next steps and to hear our allies speak about the importance of HOFNY to reducing homelessness in NYC. The Town Hall will be held at The Church of the Village (201 West 13th Street, Manhattan) from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. A meal will be served. You can RSVP [here](#).

State Advocacy Priorities

NY THE 2019 - 20

STATE
BUDGET

AFFORDABILITY
OPPORTUNITY
HEALTHCARE
HOUSING
SECURITY

Earlier this year Governor Cuomo released his FY 2019-20 Budget Proposal that is set to be adopted on March 31st. In conjunction with our many allies, Care for the Homeless (CFH) identified our top two policy issues at the State level. First, is to increase support of the 800 Community Health Centers (CHC) throughout New York State that help ensure primary care access to all individuals. Second, is the passage of the Home Stability Support Legislation (HSS) that will increase the current shelter allowance to 85% of the federal market rent thus helping to keep people in their homes.

Source: *NYSenate.gov*

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), like Care for the Homeless, are on the front line of State health care challenges. One of those challenges is providing care for uninsured patients who make up about 16% of the patient population. Fears in immigrant communities, in response to the proposed changes to the public charge rule at the Federal level, have begun to take hold, resulting in lower rates of enrollment in programs like Medicaid and CHIP, which are crucial to ensuring patients and their families have appropriate resources to stay healthy. A national study has found that NYS health centers could see 95,000 patients disenroll from Medicaid leading to a loss of \$100M in annual revenue. New York State currently allocates \$54.4M in funding to help cover the cost of caring for uninsured patients. FQHCs are asking for an increase of \$20M to the Safety Net Pool Fund, to ensure health centers can continue to provide access to comprehensive care should patients disenroll from Medicaid.

Another critical health care component is the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) certification program, a certification that Care for the Homeless has achieved. We are asking the State to maintain its level funding of \$220M for providers participating in the PCMH program to support comprehensive primary care services. Any cuts to the funding is a threat to a health centers' ability to provide the full range of comprehensive services required under PCMH including outreach and engagement, person-orientation, patient activation, and team-based care approach. Ensuring level funding will maintain support for the certified providers in the PCMH program increasing access to high quality, comprehensive primary care services.

CFH believes that housing is healthcare and keeping people in their homes is the best tool to fight homelessness. The Home Stability Support (HSS) Legislation will be a new statewide rent supplement for families and individuals who are eligible for public assistance benefits and who are facing eviction, homelessness, or loss of housing due to domestic violence or hazardous living conditions. The bill is sponsored by Andrew Hevesi in the Assembly, (A 1620) and Liz Kreuger in the Senate (S 2375). This legislation aims to assist 150,000 homeless children in NYS and 80,000 families who are on the brink of homelessness by raising the shelter allowance to 85% of the HUD defined fair market rent.

The cost of the updated home stability support allowance is estimated at \$400 million in state funding. In New York City, it is estimated that the new home stability support allowance would cost about \$11,224 on average for a family of three, while city shelter cost for the same family is on average \$38,460. That is a savings of \$27,236 per household per year! Keeping very low-income families or those in deep poverty in their apartments and avoiding homelessness would save the state millions of dollars and most importantly, it would keep people in their homes and out of shelter.

Providing high-quality primary care at CHCs and providing stable housing for those in need is not only the right thing to do but it also saves taxpayer dollars and resources. Join us in contacting your State Assembly members and Senators to advocate for:

- Added funds allocated to the Safety Net Pool,
- Maintaining support and funding for the PCMH program, and
- Passage of the Home Stability Legislation

The result? Better healthcare and better housing for those in need. You can find your State representatives [here](#).

For more information please contact at: policy@cfhnyc.org or at www.careforthehomeless.org

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Maintaining Health Care Access for Vulnerable Population

Did You Know? Community Health Centers (CHCs), like Care for the Homeless, provide comprehensive care to over 28 million patients at 11,000 service delivery sites in every state and territory. CHCs across America serve our most vulnerable populations including over 1.2 million people experiencing homelessness each year. We provide access to people who might otherwise not get regular access to healthcare. Furthermore, CHCs save the health care system more than \$24 billion annually in reduced emergency, hospital, and specialty care costs.



Source: *Business.eocc.org*

With that in mind, CHCs are gearing up for the upcoming Federal Budget negotiation period to avoid any possible lapse in funding. In 2017 the Community Health Center Fund (CHCF), which provides about 70% of the funding for CHCs, expired at the end of federal fiscal year and was not reauthorized until 5 months later. The lapse in funding was referred to as the "fiscal cliff". The CHCF will expire this year at the end of the federal budget cycle (September 30, 2019) and in order to avoid another fiscal cliff, health center advocates have started to engage Congressional representatives in supporting legislation to extend and expand the CHCF.

To date, two bills have been introduced in the Senate. The first is the Community Health Investment, Modernization, and Excellence (CHIME) Act (S. 106) introduced by Senator Blunt (R – MO) and Stabenow (D – MI) which extends the CHCF for five years, starting at \$4.2 billion with \$200 million increases each year. The second is the Community and Public Health Programs Extension Act (S. 192), introduced by Senate HELP Committee Chairperson Alexander (R – TN) and Ranking Member Murray (D – WA) which extends the CHCF for five years at level funding of \$4 billion each year. We expect members in the House to introduce legislation addressing funding for health centers in the coming weeks.

Care for the Homeless will participate in Hill visits on Thursday, March 28th at the National Association for Community Health Centers advocacy day in Washington D.C. where we will urge our Congressional representatives to co-sponsor the CHIME Act or the Community and Public Health Programs Extension Act. We will continue our advocacy for the next several months and will keep you updated on the progress to secure sustained funding for CHCs. If you care about the invaluable services that CHCs offer, call your Senators and ask them to co-sponsor one of the current bills. You can reach your member of Congress at 202-224-3121.

The Busy Advocate's March Calendar

Thur., March 7th, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., House Our Future Town Hall, The Church of the Village, 201 W. 13th Street, New York, NY 10011. RSVP [here](#).

Mon., March 11th, 10:00 a.m. City Council Public Housing Committee, Oversight of NYCHA's agreement with HUD, City Hall Committee Room, New York, NY 10007.

Mon., March 11th, 5:30 p.m., CFH "First Monday" Policy Briefing on the Home Stability Support Legislation, 30 E. 33rd Street, Manhattan, NY 10016.

Wed., Mar. 13th, 1:30 p.m., NY City Council Meeting, City Hall Council Chambers, New York, NY, 10007.

Mon., March 18th, 10:00 a.m., Preliminary budget hearing for the Health Committee, City Hall Council Chambers, New York, NY 10007.

Mon., March 25th, 10:00 a.m. Preliminary budget hearing for the General Welfare Committee, City Hall Council Chambers, New York, NY 10007.

Tue., March 26th, 2:00 p.m., Preliminary budget hearing for the Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction Committee, City Hall Committee Room, New York, NY 10007.

Wed., Mar. 27, 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m., CFH Consumer Advisory Board Meeting, 30 E. 33rd Street, 5th floor conference room, Manhattan, NY, 10016.

Thur., Mar. 28, 1:30 p.m., NY City Council Meeting, City Hall Council Chambers, New York, NY, 10007.

Sun., March 31st, End of New York State fiscal year meaning a new state budget will be adopted.