

Community Health Center Advocates Unite!

On Monday, March 2nd, Care For the Homeless (CFH) joined hundreds of advocates in Albany for the Community Health Center Association of New York State (CHCANYS) Advocacy Day. Our top priority was to advocate for important programs that facilitate the provision of comprehensive health care services for the vulnerable populations that we serve.

Two programs were our focus this year. The first is the Patient Center Medical Home (PCMH) certification program, a certification that CFH has achieved, that supports access to comprehensive



CFH advocates in Albany

primary care services. Individuals who see primary care physicians at PCMH sites have fewer specialty visits and are less likely to receive care in emergency rooms. With the threat of Medicaid cuts, at the State level, we want to ensure that this program remains at its current funding level.

The second priority is to maintain level funding for the Diagnostic and Treatment Center Safety Net Pool that provides support for uninsured patients. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), like CFH, are on the front line of state health care challenges including the provision of care for uninsured patients. Fears in immigrant communities, in response to the new public charge rule at the Federal level, have resulted in an increase of uninsured visits, which correlates with a decrease in patients enrolled in Medicaid. This suggests that Medicaid-eligible individuals are disenrolling from a program that is crucial to ensuring that patients and their families have appropriate resources to stay healthy. Maintaining the safety net pool funding would allow community health centers to continue providing care for those most in need.

Providing high-quality, comprehensive primary and preventative healthcare to patients at Community Health Centers is the right thing to do, but it also saves public resources and ensures much better health outcomes. Join us in contacting your State representatives to advocate for:

- Level funding and continued support of the PCMH program
- Level funding for the Safety Net Pool
- Support for executive budget proposals that support access to care.

Please contact your [NYS Assembly Representative](#) and [NYS Senator](#) to show your support to maintain critical funding for our health centers.

#SayYestoHSS

For years advocates, elected officials, faith leaders, service providers and people with the lived experience of homelessness have been fighting for a program that addresses a large driver of homelessness, the inability to afford the ever-increasing rents in New York. Home Stability Support (HSS) (S.2375/A.1620) looks to address that issue by bridging the gap between the current shelter allowance and 85% of the local fair market rent. For reference, the shelter allowance for a family of three is \$400 and the current fair market rent for a 2 bedroom in NYC is \$1,951, HSS would cover up to \$1,658 and the local government would have the option to cover the rest.



Source: <https://sayyestohss.org/>

One of the greatest tools to addressing homelessness is to prevent individuals and families from losing their homes. This program would make that a reality. We have less than 1 month until the State budget deadline. There are many competing priorities in Albany coupled with talk of budget deficits. We have to elevate our voices by saying **#YesToHSS!** Please click on this link and send a letter to Governor Cuomo asking him to include HSS in the state budget. Share your support on social media using #YesToHSS. Let's put us on a decisive path to ending homelessness in NY!

Building on the Success of Right to Counsel

In 2017, the NY City Council took a significant step in addressing one of the most prevalent drivers of homelessness in NYC by signing into law the Right to Counsel (RTC), a program that gives low-income tenants facing evictions free legal support in housing court. The program has been implemented in incremental phases and is expected to be available to all eligible tenants by 2022. The results have been incredible, evictions are down 40% since 2013, 15% in 2019 alone, essentially preventing homelessness for many households.

Currently, there are two bills introduced by Council Member Levine that are looking to expand the scope of RTC.

- **Intro 1104** would double the income levels that qualify for RTC from 200% of the federal poverty level to 400%;
- **Intro 1529** would require the Office of the Civil Justice coordinator to work with community groups to educate and engage tenants from different communities that could benefit from RTC.

Currently, RTC assists between 60-65%, of people in housing court. It is estimated that by raising the income threshold, 90% of people in housing court would become eligible. Keeping an individual or family in their home is a significant intervention and much more cost effective than having them enter homelessness. Let's help make this a reality, reach out to City Council, [Speaker Corey Johnson](#) and [Mayor Bill de Blasio](#) to ask for their support!

You can find more information about the Right to Counsel [here](#).



Source: <https://www.rtctoolkit.org/>

#MakeVouchersWork

Last week Care For the Homeless joined fellow advocates for the launch of *VALUE in Housing*, a campaign that looks to address the greatest barriers voucher holders face while trying to access housing. The campaign supports the following:

- Raising vouchers to 100% of the federally established Fair Market Rent;
- Increasing flexibility for recipients to earn more income while tapering off the voucher;
- Removing inequitable credit requirements;
- Distributing Know Your Rights information on source of income discrimination; and
- Increasing funding for the Source of Income Unit at the City Commission for Human Rights (the department that combats source of income discrimination).

The message behind this campaign is that everyone deserves housing regardless of their form of income.



NYC Council Member Levin speaks at the VALUE in housing campaign launch

In order to address the growing homelessness crisis and help individuals and families find stable permanent housing, the city must ensure that the vouchers work as intended. It is the only way that homeless households will be able to compete for market rate apartments. We look forward to working with fellow advocates to ensure that the City takes a decisive step in bolstering the voucher program. Join us on social media in support of the VALUE campaign by using the hashtag **#MakeVouchersWork**.

The Busy Advocate's March Calendar

Fri., Mar. 13, 1:00 p.m., Preliminary Budget Hearing on Public Housing, City Hall Committee Room, New York, NY, 10007.

Mon., Mar. 16, 10:00 a.m., Preliminary Budget Hearing on Health Committee, City Hall Council Chambers, New York, NY, 10007.

Wed., Mar. 18, 1:30 p.m., NYC Council Stated Meeting, City Hall Council Chambers, New York, NY, 10007.

Mon., Mar. 23, 11:00 a.m., Preliminary Budget Hearing for General Welfare Committee, City Hall Council Chambers, New York, NY, 10007.

Wed., Mar. 25, 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. 26, 1:30 p.m., NYC Council Stated Meeting, City Hall Council Chambers, New York, NY, 10007.

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