



PRESS RELEASE

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New campaign launched to reach uninsured LGBT New Yorkers Focus on better health coverage options coming soon through NYS Health Exchange

A new campaign was launched today to reach the estimated 25 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) New Yorkers who have no health insurance. The campaign by the LGBT Task Force of Health Care for All New York (HCFANY) is the first of its kind to focus on providing information to LGBT people about the new, more affordable health plans that will soon be available through the New York State Health Benefit Exchange.

More than one million New Yorkers are expected to gain coverage through the Exchange, which has been created under the Affordable Care Act. Starting October 1, low-income uninsured New Yorkers will be able to use the Exchange to apply for free or low-cost health insurance through an expanded Medicaid program, while uninsured people with moderate incomes will be able to apply for financial aid to help them purchase private health plans.

“For LGBT New Yorkers, those benefits cannot come soon enough,” said David Sandman, Senior Vice President of the New York State Health Foundation, which hosted today’s briefing for LGBT advocates and media. “Numerous studies have found that LGBT people are uninsured and experience health disparities at disproportionately high rates.”

“Health reform will create desperately-needed access to care for the members of the LGBT community,” said Jay Laudato, Executive Director of Callen-Lorde Community Health Center in Chelsea. “Providing information on the new coverage choices will better prepare people to make smart choices about their health insurance come October.”

LGBT Task Force Co-Chairs Lois Uttley and Mark Hannay said outreach will start at the June 30 PrideFest in Manhattan, and will continue throughout the summer and fall. The campaign was piloted earlier this month at Rockland County Pride and reached more than 1,000 people. Those who sign up will be contacted with more information just before October 1.

Kellan Baker from the LGBT Health Exchanges Project at the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C., provided a national overview at today’s briefing. “LGBT health is an LGBT equality issue,” he said. “The health reform effort in New York and nationwide offers an unprecedented opportunity for LGBT advocates, consumer health advocates and policymakers to work together to address LGBT health disparities and to make sure LGBT people and their families can get the health care they need.”

Representatives of The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center in Manhattan and the Empire State Pride Agenda said the new coverage options will help an estimated 130,000 uninsured LGBT people in NYC and about 230,000 statewide. “Increasing



access to health care for some of New York's most underserved citizens will significantly improve health outcomes for LGBT New Yorkers,” said Jonathan Lang of the Pride Agenda. “We must continue to work closely with New York State to ensure LGBT culturally competent care is made readily available all across New York State.”

“An estimated 17 percent of same-sex couples in the greater New York City area are raising children,” said Megan Fisk, Director of Family Services at The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center. “LGBT families are twice as likely to live in poverty and some work for companies that do not offer family coverage to same-sex couples and their children. The Affordable Care Act will provide better health coverage options for LGBT parents and their children.”

The LGBT Task Force has been working with Exchange officials to ensure smooth enrollment of same-sex married couples and their children into family health insurance plans, despite some technical challenges posed by the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), said Lois Uttley, Director of Raising Women’s Voices-NY. “New York is a leader in marriage equality for same-sex couples, and we want to lead the way in ensuring those couples and their families can get the health coverage they need.”

“Health Care for All New York is really excited to be leading this new outreach initiative in New York’s LGBT communities,” said Mark Hannay, Director of the Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign. “Joining forces with our allies in the LGBT Task Force, our goal is to get as many uninsured LGBT New Yorkers as possible into good, affordable coverage by 2014.”

Health Care for All New York (HCFANY) is a statewide coalition of more than 150 consumer advocacy organizations dedicated to bringing the consumer voice to the health policy conversation. HCFANY is the leading statewide consumer advocacy coalition on Affordable Care Act implementation issues, and established an LGBT Task Force in 2012.

Information on Health Care for All New York may be found at www.hcfany.org.

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