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Community Service Society of New York ☞ Consumers Union ☞ Empire Justice Center ☞ Make the Road New York
Medicare Rights Center ☞ Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign
New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage ☞ New York Immigration Coalition ☞ Project CHARGE
Public Policy and Education Fund of New York/Citizen Action of New York
Raising Women's Voices-New York ☞ Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy ☞ Young Invincibles

**Memorandum in Support of A. 5974/S. 3900
April 2019**

An Act to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to coverage for health care services under the basic health program for individuals whose immigration status renders him or her ineligible for federal financial participation.

Health Care for All New York (HCFANY) is a statewide coalition of consumer-focused organizations dedicated to achieving quality, affordable health coverage for all New Yorkers, and ensuring that the concerns of real New Yorkers are heard and reflected in policy conversations. **We strongly support A.5974/S.3900, which would expand eligibility for the Essential Plan to individuals who are not currently eligible due to their immigration status.**

The Essential Plan covers citizens and lawfully-present New Yorkers who earn up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level (about \$50,000 for a family of four). The program's federal funding can be used to cover lawfully present, but not undocumented, immigrants. New York could cover those immigrants using state-only funding. Opening the Essential Plan to all income-eligible immigrants would cover an estimated 110,000 people for \$532 million annually.¹

New York already covers undocumented immigrant children through Child Health Plus. Continuing that coverage using the Essential Plan is cost-effective for the state. The program has saved the State hundreds of millions of dollars by providing a federal funding source for immigrants who were previously covered using state-only Medicaid funding.² It is only fair to use that money to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to health care regardless of the circumstances of their birth.

Further, the financial impact of caring for uninsured New Yorkers falls disproportionately on our safety net hospitals. New York spends billions of dollars every year to stabilize hospitals that are financially distressed. Making sure that all New Yorkers have health insurance is an efficient way to support those hospitals while also living up to our promises to protect and support immigrants.

¹ Elisabeth Ryden Benjamin, "How Can New York Provide Health Insurance Coverage to its Uninsured Immigrant Residents: An Analysis of Three Coverage Options," January 2016, <https://www.cssny.org/publications/entry/covering-new-yorks-uninsured-immigrant-residents>

² Ibid.