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Advocates Urge Mayor de Blasio to Fully Cover State Budget Cuts to NYC Public Health Programs in FY20 Budget

Nonprofit providers raise alarm that NYC Mayor's current executive budget proposal excludes matching funds for Council discretionary-funded community-based organizations.

New York, NY— Nearly 80 healthcare providers, advocates, and community members joined with City Council Members Levine, Rivera, and Eugene at City Hall today to call on the Mayor to fully mitigate the impact of New York State Article 6 budget cuts in New York City's FY2020 Budget. Due to state budget cuts, NYC faces at least a \$62.4 million deficit in funding support for critical NYC public health programs. While the Mayor's April executive budget proposal included \$59 million in the budget purported to mitigate the impact, these funds would only cover administrative costs to the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene's programs. In doing so, the Mayor's budget fails to cover Article 6 matching funds for City Council discretionary-funded public health programs.

Currently, Article 6 match funding covers at least \$11 million in funding for council discretionary-funded nonprofit services focused on health outreach, immigrant health, HIV/AIDS, infant and maternal health, viral hepatitis, and more. Early estimates indicate that at least \$3.4 million of this funding is at risk of being lost due to state cuts. This devastating loss is the result of a breakdown in legislature negotiations on health spending during the State budget process, during which match funding to New York City programs was cut from 36% to 20%. New York City was the only jurisdiction targeted for this cut, with no other municipality facing similar funding reductions.

The NYC Council discretionary-funded initiatives currently estimated to receive Article 6 funding include the Access Health NYC, Beating Hearts, Cancer Services, Child Health and Wellness, Children Under Five, Dedicated Contraceptive Fund, Ending the Epidemic, HIV/AIDS Faith Based, Immigrant Health, Maternal and Child, Reproductive and Sexual Health Services, Trans Equity, and Viral Hepatitis Prevention initiatives. Nonprofits throughout the City are urging the Mayor to ensure that these cuts are fully covered in this year's NYC FY20 budget as a stopgap measure to prevent a public health crisis.

"Article 6 funding enables community-based nonprofits to provide vital outreach to their communities on a long list of critical public health issues, including HIV and hepatitis prevention and treatment, immigrant health issues, and lowering maternal mortality rates," said **City Council Health Chair Mark Levine**. "These groups are our first line of defense in addressing critical public health issues and the threat of losing any of their matching state funds is just simply unacceptable."

"The Mayor must provide full funding to mitigate state Article 6 budget cuts, especially with the federal government continuing to threaten support for affordable quality healthcare. The vital programs that receive Council discretionary funding provide support for immigrant and low-income communities to receive needed primary and maternal care, and it is imperative that the Mayor's Article 6 mitigation plan includes funding for these programs as well," said **Councilwoman Carlina Rivera, Chair of the Council's Committee on Hospitals**.

"I join my Council colleagues and community-based health providers across New York City in denouncing the slashing of Article 6 public health matching funds in this year's state budget. The state's inexplicable

action means that millions of dollars will be cut from City Council initiatives, like Access Health NYC, which focus on maternal and child health, immigrant health, HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis prevention and treatment, and much more. There are few things more important, and cost-effective, than public health outreach and education. The City of New York must fill the gap in its FY20 budget," **said Council Member Helen Rosenthal (Manhattan, District 6).**

"New York City residents are now facing a multi-million dollar cut to vital City health programs, and not one politician, not the Mayor, or the Governor, gave a public speech on why these cuts are necessary, because cutting \$59-65 million from NYC health programs is deeply unpopular and deeply irresponsible from a public health and fiscal standpoint," **said Charles King, CEO and co-founder of Housing Works.** "These cuts are really alarming and it's clear that Governor Cuomo made them out of spite for New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, notwithstanding the harm they will do to Cuomo's own initiatives, such as Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic and the elimination of hepatitis C. Right now we are asking Mayor de Blasio to stand up for NYC and fully mitigate the cut in the Mayor's Executive Budget and this means also mitigating the estimated \$3.4 million in cuts to community health care providers funded through City Council Health Initiatives. Community health providers and New Yorkers from every borough are outraged and are eager to work with the Mayor to have the previous reimbursement arrangement restored at the State level—but it is essential that the Mayor puts the health of New Yorkers first by fully mitigating these cuts."

"Article 6 funding supports vital health services that help New York City's most vulnerable residents, including: immigrants, people of color, women and children, people with disabilities, and low-wage workers," **said Elisabeth R. Benjamin, MSPH, JD., Vice President, Health Initiatives of the Community Service Society of New York.** "We urge the Mayor and the City Council Members to include funding in the FY20 City Budget to cover the loss of these funds for City Council discretionary-funded public health programs."

"New York State cuts to Article 6 unfairly impact New York City health programs and will disproportionately strain the Asian Pacific American community," **said Anita Gundanna and Vanessa Leung, Co-Executive Directors of CACF: Coalition for Asian American Children and Families.** "Cutting funding to community-based organizations, particularly those with culturally and linguistically competent services, will severely limit access to health for APAs - a highly immigrant community with almost 45% who speak little to no English. We call on the Mayor and City Council to fully restore to community-based health programs the funding lost by these cuts."

"NYC and its residents face unique public health challenges when compared to the State, all of which disproportionately impact vulnerable populations such as LGBTQ people, low-income individuals and people of color," **said Glenda Testone, Executive Director of The LGBT Community Center.** "Losing public health funding puts the lives of these populations at risk. We strongly urge Mayor de Blasio to fully mitigate the lost funding to keep from widening historical health inequities that vulnerable New Yorkers already experience."

"During a time when we most need increased investment in public health funding, and when Washington continues to attempt to undermine the ACA, we need New York City and State to lead. As a partner in Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2020, GMHC opposes any disinvestment that would work against this goal," **said Cub Barrett, Vice President of Communications and Public Affairs at Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC).** "We stand strongly beside all organizations and our allies in elected office as we address this funding crisis and look forward to ensuring communities mobilize in Albany. Healthcare is a right—and one for which we will fight."

"Really? With constant threats from Washington to cut public health funds, our State and City governments are slashing away," **said Robert Hayes, President and CEO of Community Healthcare Network.** "These cuts would be deeply felt by our patients and worsen health disparities throughout underserved communities. We urge the Mayor to account for these losses by including funding for city discretionary initiatives in the FY20 budget."

"At this critical time when our City recognizes the importance of maternal and infant health initiatives to improve outcomes and reduce disparities in low-income and communities of color, we cannot afford to scale back programs due to cuts in State funding," **said Keith Little, Executive Director, SCO Family of Services.** "Programs like SCO's Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) empower over 400 first-time mothers each year in Brownsville, Bed-Stuy, Crown Heights, and East New York, to create healthier futures for themselves and their children. We urge the Mayor and the City Council to keep NFP and other programs funded by Article 6 whole and accessible for New York's families."

"These cuts put the health and well-being of children and families at risk, at a time when our city and state should be investing more in public health," **said Jennifer March, Executive Director of Citizens' Committee for Children.** "We cannot let health disparities widen, particularly as we face new threats to immigrant communities and striking inequities in child and maternal health. We urge the Mayor and the City Council to fully mitigate the impact of these cuts in this year's city budget, and we stand ready to work together to secure state funding restorations next year."

"At a time in our nation when the future of healthcare is so uncertain, it is all the more important for New York to continue to be a model for health care policy that drives innovative public health solutions and long-term cost savings. It is impossible to do that while cutting funds that sustain vital resources, " **said Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care.** "We urge Mayor de Blasio and the New York City Council to fill the funding gap created by the New York State budget to prevent a public health crisis of escalating new cases of HIV and STIs. We also ask the Mayor and City Council to stand up for NYC public health programs by strongly advocating for the Governor and State legislature to restore these harmful cuts."

"The state has chosen the worst possible time to cut matching funding for Access Health NYC, a critical health outreach program serving low-income communities," **said Seongeun Chun, Senior Manager of Health Policy at the New York Immigration Coalition.** "In the face of the Trump administration's relentless attacks on immigrants, it's more important than ever that New York City steps in to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to the information and support they need to guarantee the well-being of families across the city. The state's callous disregard of our immigrant communities does not need to be New York City's failure, too."

"There are about 130,000 New Yorkers who lack healthcare access in New York due to their documentation status. Many more will fall into this gap as federal policies threaten programs like DACA and Temporary Protected Status that have previously provided a pathway to healthcare for special categories of immigrants," **said Mon Yuck Yu, Executive Vice President & Chief of Staff, Academy of Medical & Public Health Services.** "In this environment, community organizations like ours play an important role -- as a safety net to the safety net, to help fill the gap that our federal and state governments have created. Disinvestment in Article 6 funding will be detrimental for our free health, mental health, and social assistance programs, threatening not only the health outcomes of immigrant communities but also the public health of our city. This is not the time to ignore this vulnerable population, but to support them. Healthcare is not a privilege but a basic human right; we strongly urge the Mayor and City Council to restore funding to community-based organizations that will be impacted by these cuts in FY20."

"At a time when the federal government is cutting critical community health funding and making it more dangerous for Asian American and Pacific Islanders and immigrants to access these programs, the cuts to Article 6 funding on the State level double down on our tiered healthcare system in which people of color, immigrants, and Limited English Proficient New Yorkers lack access to quality care. It is critical that the Mayor bolster funding to community-based organizations and programs to ensure that all New Yorkers are able to access the resources, information and support they need to be healthy." **said Carlyn Cowen, Chief Policy and Public Affairs Officer at the Chinese American Planning Council (CPC).**

"City Council discretionary-funded public health programs, like Care For the Homeless' highly successful Peer Outreach program, help thousands of vulnerable New Yorkers access invaluable lifesaving services. Connecting people to community-based integrated health care not only improves the health of individuals but it is also a cost-saving alternative to receiving primary care in emergency departments. Restoring this funding is the right thing to do: it will lead to better health outcomes while saving public resources. In an era

when the social safety net is once again under attack, it also sends a clear message that NYC is committed to its most vulnerable residents by reducing barriers to accessing appropriate medical and mental health care services.” **said George Nashak, Executive Director, Care for the Homeless.**

“One could argue that there has always been underfunding to vital public health programs but it is more meaningful at a period of time when cuts in state aid to build capacity are unfairly passed on to the city, haven’t been restored by the Mayor, and risks have increased,” **said Anthony Feliciano, Director of the Commission on the Public’s Health System.** “While Article 6 state funds were not fully cut by the Governor, the bleeding is still significant to community-based organization’s ability to address disparities in accessing healthcare and health outcomes for low income immigrants, communities of color, expecting mothers, women, children, people with chronic diseases, and the LGBTQ communities throughout the five boroughs.”

“It’s outright shameful that the Governor cut Article 6 funding and we encourage the City to close the gap in the FY 2020 budget,” **said Maria Lizardo, Executive Director, NMIC.** “Immigrant communities already face many barriers to accessing health care and these cuts severely impact our ability to connect them to much needed services.”

“Our Governor has shown us what his priorities are and it’s clear that community health programs aren’t one of them. Real access doesn’t just mean that we’ve created a service, but that that service can actually be utilized by all New Yorkers.,” **said Diya Basu-Sen, Executive Director of Sapna NYC.** “We’re lucky that NYC has a lot of services it’s invested in; however, the city simply isn’t equipped to ensure that immigrant populations have that real access. With Access Health funding community based organizations like Sapna NYC have been able to work with these immigrant populations to make sure that access to health in NYC is real and not just something that exists on paper.”

“On behalf of Brooklyn Perinatal Network, Inc. and the Brooklyn Coalition for Health Equity for Women and Families, we seek restoration and support for the funds withdrawn from the State (Article 6 dollars). This will have a devastating impact on our population, particularly the maternal child health population and the communities we serve who are already facing health inequities,” **said Denise West, Deputy Executive Director of Brooklyn Perinatal Network, Inc.** “These funds helps CBOS such as ours to provide needed support services that are often the glue that keeps the family together, taking away these funds takes that away that glue.”

“It is very disturbing for such an important array of community health programs to be suddenly attacked by the governor. Equally disturbing is that the City evidently still doesn’t plan to help the many City Council-funded programs with replacement funding,” **said Chris Norwood, Executive Director, Health People.** “Both are saying that what is important to the community isn’t important to them!”