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# Mayor de Blasio Announces Plan to Guarantee Health Care for all New Yorkers

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*State of the City 2019: Most comprehensive, universal coverage in nation will guarantee primary and specialty care to 600,000 uninsured New Yorkers*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced his administration will launch the largest, most comprehensive plan in the nation to guarantee health care for every New Yorker. The plan will serve the 600,000 New Yorkers without insurance by strengthening NYC’s public health insurance option, MetroPlus, and guaranteeing anyone ineligible for insurance – including undocumented New Yorkers – has direct access to NYC Health + Hospitals’ physicians, pharmacies and mental health and substance abuse services through a new program called NYC Care. All services will be affordable on a sliding scale. The programs will include customer-friendly call lines to help New Yorkers – regardless of their insurance – make appointments with general practitioners, cardiologists, pediatricians, gynecologists and a full spectrum of health care services.

“Health care is a right, not a privilege reserved for those who can afford it,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “While the federal government works to gut health care for millions of Americans, New York City is leading the way by guaranteeing that every New Yorker has access to quality, comprehensive access to care, regardless of immigration status or their ability to pay.”

“With today’s announcement of NYC Care, New York City takes another leap ahead of the rest of the nation in providing mental health services,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “Guaranteed health care means guaranteed MENTAL health care and alcohol/drug addiction treatment. No other city or state provides these comprehensive services to ALL residents.”

“We have the tools and opportunity to guarantee health care for all New Yorkers,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. “New Yorkers who can’t enroll in or afford health insurance will now be able to access comprehensive, patient-centered services through NYC Care. At the same time, we will amplify our efforts to increase enrollment into MetroPlus. Today we celebrate our City’s relentless commitment to accessible, high-quality health care.”

“Expanding access to care is a key step in eliminating health disparities in our city,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. “The Affordable Care Act started us down this path, but it is time to finish the job. New York City is proud to lead the way. I stand with Mayor de Blasio today in declaring health care is a right for all, not a privilege for only those who can afford care.”

“NYC Care will be the biggest and most comprehensive health coverage program in the country,” said **Dr. Mitchell Katz, President and CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals**. “Building on the great work of our doctors, nurses and staff, and working collaboratively with community partners, NYC Health + Hospitals will help give all New Yorkers the quality care they deserve.”

"In the fairest big City in America, everyone, no matter where they came from, or when they got here, has a right to be healthy and get the care they need to thrive," said **Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs**. "We know that there are persistent disparities in health insurance coverage between citizens and non-citizen New Yorkers, - including undocumented immigrants - where nearly 94% of U.S.-born New Yorkers have health insurance, compared with just 69% of non-citizen New Yorkers. Today's announcement brings us one step closer to realizing a truly inclusive vision of healthcare for all."

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, 8 million New Yorkers now have health insurance, and the uninsured rate is about nearly half of what it was in 2013. In the last two years, New York City's Public Engagement Unit coordinated signing up more than 130,000 New Yorkers for plans through the exchanges created by the law. However, about 600,000 New Yorkers remain without insurance, because they do not or cannot enroll. Through this new initiative, New York City will create a bigger, better, more comprehensive program for guaranteed health care. The City aims to better connect people to more effective and affordable health care in one of two ways:

- **NYC Care:** The city will connect hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who are ineligible for health insurance – including undocumented New Yorkers and those who cannot afford insurance – to reliable care. Anyone will be able to access comprehensive care across NYC Health + Hospitals' more than 70+ locations, once the program is fully ramped up. NYC Care is open to anyone who does not have an affordable insurance option and will be priced on a sliding scale, to ensure affordability. NYC Care will provide a primary care doctor and will provide access to specialty care, prescription drugs, mental health services, hospitalization, and more.
- **NYC's Public Option:** The City will double down on efforts to boost enrollment in MetroPlus, the City's public option. MetroPlus provides free or affordable health insurance that connects insurance-eligible New Yorkers to a network of providers that includes NYC Health + Hospitals' 11 hospitals and 70 clinics. MetroPlus serves as an affordable, quality option for people on Medicaid, Medicare, and those purchasing insurance on the exchange. The City is committed to strengthening MetroPlus and connecting more independent workers, City vendors and City workers to that option. It also will improve the quality of the MetroPlus customer experience through improved access to clinical care, mental health services, and wellness rewards for healthy behavior.

The City is taking an unprecedented approach to health care services by tackling mental and physical issues holistically. Through both programs, New Yorkers will be able to access addiction services and opioid treatment, mental health counseling, and counseling services for trauma victims. New Yorkers will be able to call MetroPlus or 311 to be screened for health insurance eligibility and get connected to their best coverage option.

As part of this initiative, H+H will be significantly enhancing 24/7 customer service to seamlessly connect patients to healthcare.

NYC Care will launch in summer 2019 and will roll out geographically, starting in the Bronx. It will be fully available to all New Yorkers across the five boroughs in 2021. The program will cost at least \$100 million annually at full scale. Additionally, MetroPlus will announce a series of enhancements throughout the year.

"I commend New York City's effort to expand necessary services to those who need it most. NYC Care will provide healthcare access to everyone, including undocumented residents," said **Assistant Speaker Felix W.Ortiz**. "This is a monumental step towards a public health program for all people, an

effort long overdue. I look forward to working with the city to ensure this program reaches those its intended to help.”

“Health care is a human right. Every New Yorker, no matter their race, gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status should have accessible and reliable health care. I believe the Mayor’s plan is a powerful step in this fight for affordable and reliable health care. This is also why I continue to fight for single-payer healthcare as a New York State Senator,” said **Senator Jessica Ramos**.

“Thanks to the De Blasio administration, over 600,000 New Yorkers will now have access to comprehensive, high-quality health care. I strongly believe that healthcare is a basic, fundamental right for all New Yorkers, which is why I’m a proud co-sponsor of the New York Health Act in the state legislature,” said **State Senator Brad Hoylman**. “I applaud the De Blasio administration for their efforts and look forward to building on this achievement in Albany this session with Assembly Member Dick Gottfried and Senator Gustavo Rivera.”

**Senator James Sanders Jr. said:** “The Care NYC program is an ambitious and bold step forward in increasing access to healthcare for all New Yorkers including those who could not previously afford coverage as well as the undocumented. This program will allow participants to go beyond just visiting a general medical practitioner, but also include care from cardiologists, pediatricians, gynecologists and more. I look forward to seeing the Care NYC program grow and prosper as it helps to create a healthier New York.”

“Providing healthcare to all NYC residents -- including addiction, rehabilitation and mental health services -- is a monumental step toward in the delivery of necessary medical treatment for all. I look forward to working with the administration to implement real affordable medical treatment for each and every NYC resident,” said **Assembly Member Michael G. Dendekker**.

It is so important to connect all New Yorkers with affordable and reliable health care, and I’m thrilled that the City has taken steps to provide this basic right to our 600,000 uninsured neighbors across NYC. Expanding enrollment in MetroPlus and providing affordable care through NYC Care regardless of insurance means that more New Yorkers will get the comprehensive services that they need,” said **Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon**.

**Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz (Northwest Bronx) said:** “A healthy population begets a thriving economy and a strong city, and that begins with universal access to affordable healthcare. Far too many people forego medical appointments and delay receiving treatment simply because they can’t afford the cost of being sick. Mayor de Blasio’s plan to guarantee healthcare for every New Yorker is a tremendous first step towards ensuring that everyone can receive the medical care they need – whether it is preventative checkups, mental health services, or treatment of an illness. I am proud to be part of a city that is at the forefront of universal healthcare and I thank Mayor de Blasio for his leadership on this important issue.”

“I have seen first- hand some of the disadvantages that our healthcare system deals to people who are of a different background than their provider, be it racially, culturally, or economically. Everyone should have a right to affordable, safe, culturally sensitive, high quality health care regardless of their economic situations,” said **Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte**. “With NYC Care, the citizens of this great city can finally exercise that right.”

“Health care should be a right, and while the ACA has helped, too many of us are still uninsured and struggle to get the care we need,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A Brewer**. “With this far-

reaching plan to guarantee care for everyone, the de Blasio administration is showing the rest of the country that New Yorkers look out for each other. I'm thrilled that 600,000 uninsured people in our city will have new peace of mind knowing they'll be able to access comprehensive care through MetroPlus and NYC Health+Hospitals, including vital services for addiction and mental health."

"As the representative of East Harlem and the South Bronx — both of which are neighborhoods with significant uninsured populations, I am ecstatic about the implementation of NYC Care, as it will provide thousands of New Yorkers with access to comprehensive health care services. I thank Mayor de Blasio, Deputy Mayor Palacio, and Dr. Katz for their efforts to make this plan possible," said **Council Member Diana Ayala, Chair of the City Council's Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction.**

"Let's say it loud and clear today - healthcare is a basic human right. No New Yorker should ever have to choose between paying for their health or putting food on the table. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for working to ensure that everyone, including the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who are undocumented, has access to a healthcare option they can afford. This plan will not only strengthen the health of everyday New Yorkers, but also the health of our public hospital system. I look forward to working with the Mayor to implement this ground-breaking plan," said **City Councilwoman Carlina Rivera, Chair of the Council's Committee on Hospitals.**

"At a time when hundreds of thousands of city residents cannot access the care they need because of underfunding and uncertainty in Washington, DC, the Mayor's plan puts NYC Health + Hospitals and its tens of thousands of dedicated public health workers, including over 18,000 DC 37 members, on the cutting edge of comprehensive health care delivery," said **Henry Garrido, DC 37 Executive Director.** "The approach announced by the Mayor ultimately makes the system more efficient, cost effective, and most importantly, will result in a healthier city."

"Today the city is taking a big step in ensuring access to health services for all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status. Immigrants in particular are faced with huge barriers to healthcare and we have yet to see significant action at the state and federal level to ensure access to coverage for all of the uninsured. We look forward to working with Mayor de Blasio to implement NYC Cares and ensure access to H+H options and insurance, if eligible," said **Rebecca Telzak, Director of Health Programs at Make the Road New York.**

"For too long, too many, particularly women low-wage workers, have not had access to health care. This is an inspiring and extremely practical model for every city in the nation," said **Ai-jen Poo, Executive Director, National Domestic Workers Alliance.**

"Affordable, high-quality healthcare for immigrant workers is essential to our city's thriving, and no one knows that better NICE members who work in some of the most dangerous, unregulated sectors of our economy, like construction and domestic work," said **Manuel Castro, Executive Director of New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE).** "Our members historically have struggled to access appropriate care that they can afford in the languages they speak, so we applaud the city for taking another step in providing necessary healthcare for all New Yorkers, particularly in a time when immigrants are under attack."

"All people, regardless of their income or immigration status, deserve access to high-quality health care. Period. We applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio for launching NYC Care to ensure that all New Yorkers can access health care, including preventive care, gynecological care, mental health care and other services. As the White House continues to spew anti-immigrant rhetoric and attempt to block immigrants from accessing basic resources they need, NYC must do everything we can support our

immigrant communities. NYC is a place for everyone—a place where all people can live and thrive without fear to be who we are—and the new NYC Care program affirms that,” said **Laura McQuade, President and CEO, Planned Parenthood of New York City.**

“For one hundred years, the progressive movement has fought for an America where everyone has the medical care they need. I hope to live to see the establishment of Medicare For All, finally achieving that dream. In the meantime, I am so grateful to Mayor de Blasio for putting the full strength of his administration behind this important cause. I am eager to see it succeed, transforming the lives of so many New Yorkers and proving to the country that universal health care is possible,” said **Ady Barkan, Center for Popular Democracy.**

“This is exactly how New York should lead in the era of Trump. Mayor de Blasio's initiative recognizes that when the federal government fails to guarantee a basic right like health care, cities and states have the power to step up. This will make New York a stronger, healthier city, and elected officials around the country should take note,” said **Dahlia McManus, Deputy Director of the New York Working Families Party.**

“We applaud Mayor de Blasio for taking this important step to address the health needs of hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants in our city who are under attack by the Trump Administration,” said **David R. Jones, Esq., President and CEO of the Community Service Society.** “And we encourage the State, which has been a leader in expanding health care coverage to needy populations in New York, to continue its trailblazing efforts to make our health insurance system more accessible. For just \$532 million annually—a mere rounding error in the State’s health care budget—the State could build on its health care accomplishments and offer comprehensive health coverage to all immigrant New Yorkers left behind under the Affordable Care Act.”

“No one should have to decide between putting a roof over their head or seeing a doctor, yet this is too often the reality. All New Yorkers deserve access to the health care they need and we applaud Mayor de Blasio and his administration for making this their top priority,” said **Andrea Miller, President of the National Institute for Reproductive Health.** “New York City has long been a leader in ensuring access to reproductive healthcare, beginning with abortion training for residents in H+H hospitals, access to contraception at comprehensive school based health centers, and today with the expansion of insurance coverage for all New Yorkers.”

“CCC applauds Mayor de Blasio for this bold plan to guarantee all New Yorkers have access to affordable health care,” said **Jennifer March, Executive Director of Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York.** “Children are more likely to be insured when their parents are insured, and expanding coverage options will lead to healthier families and healthier communities. In the face of constant federal threats to healthcare, New York can be a leader in protecting and expanding access to essential health and behavioral health services for all New Yorkers, including undocumented New Yorkers.”

“Mayor de Blasio’s announcement today that New York City will provide health care to every City resident affirms the belief, strongly held by New York’s entire hospital community, that health care is a fundamental human right,” said **Greater New York Hospital Association president Kenneth E. Raske.** “By enrolling as many City residents as possible in NYC H + H’s MetroPlus program and launching NYC Care for those who cannot access insurance programs, New York City is demonstrating its deep commitment to achieving universal coverage. I applaud the Mayor and NYC H + H for launching this extremely important initiative.”

"In New York City, almost 15% of Asian Americans ages 18 and over are uninsured and almost 90% of those uninsured are foreign born. As a New York State Patient Navigator contractor working with 8 other organizations," says **Anita Gundanna, Co-Executive Director of CACF (Coalition for Asian American Children and Families), the nation's only pan-Asian policy advocacy group,**" we are too well aware of the difficulties Asian Pacific American families and individuals face in accessing health coverage and care." **Vanessa Leung, Co-Executive Director of CACF** says, "The NYC Care program will provide all residents with health care, including those who are undocumented. We are happy that NYC is taking leadership and initiative in making health care coverage a fundamental right for everyone, regardless of status and/or ability to pay."

"Most of New York City's professional drivers already rely on Health and Hospitals clinics and hospitals for primary care and emergency services. This initiative can fill voids that still exist in access to care and will be a lifeline for New Yorkers who, like many of our members, don't qualify for Medicaid but still can't afford premiums. And it will finally allow our undocumented neighbors access to much-needed healthcare services. The initiative could transform NYC into a global city leading our country in common sense and compassion with universal healthcare coverage," said **Bhairavi Desai, Executive Director of 21,000-member New York Taxi Workers Alliance which represents yellow, green, App, livery and black car drivers.**

"We applaud the Mayor's effort to expand access to critical services for all New Yorkers. Healthcare is a right and should be accessible to all regardless of income or immigration status," said **John Park Executive Director of the MinKwon Center for Community Action.**

"We welcome this great initiative, NYC Care, and we look forward with working the City and Mayor de Blasio to ensure that all eligible New Yorkers are covered," said **Elsie Saint-Louis, Executive Director of Haitian-Americans United for Progress.**

"Our rights to health care have been infringed and under attack from the federal government. It is important to ensure that all have opportunity to get covered. We support the city and mayor in their efforts to create a program for the uninsured. The benefits of expanding coverage outweigh the costs for added services," said **Anthony Feliciano, Director of the Commission on the Public's Health System.**

"New York Lawyers for the Public Interest applauds this ambitious effort to save lives. The City's continuing commitment to care for New Yorkers who are ineligible or can't afford insurance means NYC Health + Hospitals can better address the impact of the nation's healthcare crisis on the people of New York City. As attacks on the Affordable Care Act and healthcare for New Yorkers who are immigrants drive people away from the basic care they need, New York City leads in providing vital help," said **Laura F. Redman, Health Justice Director, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.**

"We applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio for his visionary healthcare initiative guaranteeing access to medical care for every New Yorker. This program will be especially important for restaurant workers whom Restaurant Opportunities Centers United organizes, represents, and supports. Employer-sponsored health insurance coverage is rare in the restaurant industry, leaving too many of the lowest paid workers in frequent financial crises. Moreover, New York City has some of the highest percentage of immigrants among its restaurant workers whose ability to access affordable health care is even more limited. We are thrilled that the initiative will be inclusive of the immigrant population. Healthcare is a human right and we hope our state and the federal governments will be inspired by the Mayor's initiative, so one day soon we all can benefit from a single-payer system and improve our nation's health outcomes at a

cost that doesn't ruin any family's budget," said **Sekou Siby, Executive Director of Restaurant Opportunities Centers United**.

"NYC Cares is a giant leap in the right direction toward guaranteeing the right to healthcare for all. We applaud New York City and Mayor de Blasio for this critical program. While providing access to coverage for the uninsured is a necessity for a high functioning health system, the Campaign for NY Health remains committed to working with all stakeholders to address the high costs and financial barriers for the millions of New Yorkers with private health insurance coverage who struggle to afford the care they need," said **Katie Robbins, Director, Campaign for NY Health**.

"In a time when expanded access to health care is threatened under our current Federal Administration, The Center applauds the City and Mayor de Blasio for stepping up to ensure that all New Yorkers have the access they deserve to coverage through NYC Care," said **Glenda Testone, Executive Director of NYC's LGBT Community Center**. "LGBTQ New Yorkers, including undocumented community members, face serious health care disparities and this program will provide a lifeline for those who need it most."

"By guaranteeing health care access to many of New York City's most vulnerable, underserved populations, Mayor Bill de Blasio is helping us reach our collective goal to end the AIDS epidemic in New York City and New York State," said **Kelsey Louie, CEO of Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC)**. "More access to health care means more access to not just HIV prevention, testing, and treatment, but more access to treating the drivers of the epidemic like mental health and substance use issues. This is a huge step forward in our fight to end AIDS."

"At a time when access to health care is under attack, it is crucial to expand access to affordable, comprehensive coverage in New York and continue the gains made through the Affordable Care Act," said **Melanie Kruevelis, Northeast Policy Analyst at Young Invincibles**. "We commend City Hall's effort to expand coverage to every remaining uninsured New Yorker, especially young adults and immigrants who often get left out of the system."

"We are most privileged to live in a City where all people matter and will be able to provide health care for all. Religious tradition teaches that we have a moral responsibility to preserve human health. Thank you Mayor for making it possible for us to fulfill a tradition that belongs to all of us as believers of different faiths but also as members of one human family," said **Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Executive Vice President, New York Board of Rabbis**.

"Is anything better than a healthy city? From strong health comes strong people. Thank you mayor de Blasio." **Rev. Dr. Donna Schaper, Senior Minister, Judson Memorial Church**.

"This announcement is a major breakthrough for all New Yorkers. As I think of all those who have been turned away because they don't have coverage, who have suffered, and who have even died because of lack of coverage, I am so elated to see us take an extraordinary leap to healthcare for all. It is a big step in the right direction," said **Rev. Que English, Bronx Christian Fellowship Church & Mayor's Clergy Advisory Council**.

"Our Poverty Tracker data show that far too often unexpected illnesses throw New Yorkers into cycles of poverty," said **Wes Moore, CEO of Robin Hood**. "We are proud that we partnered with the City in developing the blueprint for NYC Care, and we are grateful for the City's leadership in taking this endeavor to scale to promote access to health care for all."

“As a national nonprofit public health organization with a strong membership base in New York City, American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP) applauds NYC in its decision to provide universal health coverage to its residents and we hope other cities follow in its example,” said **AMHP's Health Policy & Advocacy Director, Dr. Sana Syed**.

“United Hospital Fund applauds the Mayor’s historic efforts to provide access to essential care for all New Yorkers. This is an important step in creating a healthier and more equitable city,” said **Anthony Shih, MD, MPH, President, United Hospital Fund**.

“I commend Mayor de Blasio and his administration for expanding access to healthcare for all New York City residents,” said **Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi**. “Healthcare is a basic human right that no one should be denied due to lack of affordability.”

“In the richest city in the world, it would be a moral shame if everyone did not have access to health care, including mental health care,” said **Rev. Clinton Miller, Senior Pastor, Brown Memorial Baptist Church**.

“Access to affordable, quality healthcare is a barrier to good health for far too many people. This issue of inequity keeps individuals, families and entire communities from living their healthiest lives,” said **Judith A. Salerno, MD, MS, President of The New York Academy of Medicine**. “We applaud the Mayor’s announcement today as an important and meaningful step forward toward attaining health equity for all New Yorkers.”

This effort makes New York a national model for protecting the right to health care access for all people, regardless of where they work or what their immigration status is. We will keep working to build on landmark progressive victory,” said **Andrew Friedman, co-Executive Director at the Center for Popular Democracy**.

“Healthcare is a right not a privilege. Today’s announcement makes that a reality for New York City,” said **Dennis Trainor, Vice President, CWA District One**.

“For too long, comprehensive healthcare has been out of reach for hundreds of thousands of people in our communities, particularly immigrants and low-wage workers,” said **Maritza Silva-Farrell, executive director of ALIGN**. “NYC Care affirms that every New Yorker, regardless of financial means and immigration status, deserve quality health care. At a time when low-wage workers and immigrant communities are under attack by the federal government, we applaud this effort to guarantee health care coverage for all and further address inequity in New York City.”

“Our community work and healthcare advocacy demonstrates that basic and preventive care continues to be the centerpiece for healthy and hard working families in NY, and across the nation,” said **Frankie Miranda, Executive Vice President at Hispanic Federation**. “We are therefore inspired by Mayor de Blasio's announcement today which recognizes the value of providing all NYC residents with the critical health care coverage they need. Healthcare is a right for all. Removing the uncertainty around healthcare allows families to focus on the things that help them succeed - school, work and career development. It is a no-brainer. A healthy family contributes to a strong and healthy New York where we all win.”

“Without primary care, families risk costly and serious complications from illnesses that can threaten their long-term health and financial security as well as worsen other social and economic inequities,” said **Louise Cohen, CEO of the Primary Care Development Corporation (PCDC)**. “PCDC applauds

Mayor de Blasio and Dr. Katz for investing in NYC Care to provide access to primary care and other vital health services to help New Yorkers stay healthy.”

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