New York City Council Hearing

Examining H+H's NYC Care Program and Access to Health Care for Uninsured New Yorkers

Committee on Hospitals

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Good afternoon Chairwoman Narcisse and members of the Committee on Hospitals. I am Dr. Ted Long, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of Clinical Services and Population Health at NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H), and a practicing primary care physician at H+H facilities in the Bronx. I am joined today by Dr. Jonathan Jiménez, Executive Director of NYC Care and a family medicine physician at NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Cumberland. It is exciting for me to share with you today why NYC Care has received national recognition for its impact on health equity, and the impact this program has had on New Yorkers.

At NYC Health + Hospitals, our focus is on being a fully integrated health system that enables New Yorkers to live their healthiest lives. As we see health care access changing rapidly due to shifts at the national level with the implementation of H.R. 1, H+H is committed to excellence in healthcare, innovating to increase awareness of the importance of preventative healthcare, while making it as affordable and accessible as possible for New Yorkers typically excluded. This is where NYC Care enters.

In 2019, NYC Care launched in the Bronx before expanding to all five boroughs in 2020 with the goal of bringing a health care access membership program that guarantees low-cost and no-cost services to New Yorkers who do not qualify or cannot afford health insurance based on federal guidelines. This program is the nation's largest and most comprehensive initiative to guarantee health care, regardless of immigration status or ability to pay, and brings direct access to NYC Health + Hospitals, the nation's largest public health care system. Today, NYC Care has close to 125,000 members.

An individual is considered eligible if they do not qualify for, or otherwise cannot afford, private health insurance based on federal income guidelines. To learn more about their eligibility and to get enrolled, New Yorkers can meet with an NYC Health + Hospitals financial counselor, visit one of our 20 community-based organization (CBO), or call NYC Care Call Center at 646-NYC-CARE.

Once enrolled, NYC Care members can access covered services on a sliding fee scale at our facilities, which includes our 11 hospitals and Gotham clinics. Since NYC Care is not health insurance, there are no premiums, deductibles, or co-pays. New patients are offered a primary care appointment within two weeks at one of our H+H locations.

NYC Care members gain access not only to primary and preventative care services, but the full slate of specialty care that H+H offers. This includes, routine screenings, mammograms, and services such as obstetrics and gynecological care, dental care, behavioral health care and eye care. Members can have visits with any provider within our network. Within behavioral health care, services include mental health and substance use treatment, as well as access to telehealth and Virtual Express Care. Members have access to a 24/7-member service hotline in over 300 languages and dialects by calling the same NYC Care number they may have used to enroll. Members also have access to affordable prescription benefits and 24/7 pharmacy access. As of 2025, NYC Care members also have access to low-cost or no-cost, prescribed, durable medical equipment for their medical conditions—a benefit that over 2,500 members utilized during its first year. Accessing high-quality, affordable health care services that put patients first should not be a challenge, and NYC Care aims to make to make it as seamless as possible.

NYC Care meets New Yorkers where they are to bring exceptional health care services to all. Since its launch, NYC Care has had over 1,000,000 community-outreach interactions in collaboration with contracted CBOs throughout the five boroughs. Additionally, NYC Care members have completed over 1,000,000 primary care appointments. Peer-reviewed studies have shown that new NYC Care members and new Medicaid enrollees show comparable utilization of primary care and specialty care. More importantly, the two groups show the same levels of chronic disease control.

Above all, NYC Health + Hospitals is focused on keeping New Yorkers engaged in preventative health services, which not only has positive impacts on New Yorkers long-term health, but also for H+H. Data shows that even when members become eligible for health insurance and can disenroll from NYC Care—they stay engaged in care at H+H. Over the last five years, NYC Health + Hospitals has seen substantial growth in primary care, with over 70,000 new primary care patients. Today, NYC Health + Hospitals has more patients in primary care than in the history of the system. This has been made possible through initiatives such as:

- Expanding primary care physician's ability to see more patients, allowing for more, new patient access, increasing from 1,500 patients per full time provider to 1,750;
- Adding to our staffing models to ensure that primary care physicians seeing more patients does not impact access to timely care, which means increasing the care team so that patients can get their care inside and outside the clinic from team members that include their primary care doctor, advanced practitioners that work directly with their doctors, chronic disease nurses, chronic disease management clinical pharmacists, social workers and community health workers;
- Using timed, data-driven clinic slot opening tools to ensure the highest utilization possible for all primary care provider time;
- Focusing on reducing no-show through iterative processes so that no appointments go unused, including changes to the SMS and telephone call reminder systems – both the messaging itself as well as the timing of the messaging;

At NYC Health + Hospitals, our north star is to treat healthcare as a human right, and provide the highest standard of care to all who walk through our doors. NYC Care continues to provide access to real, comprehensive health care that shows meaningful results in advancing health care equity for its

members. Rooted in innovation, patient trust, and an overarching goal to ensure all New Yorkers, regardless of their immigration status or ability to pay, have access to health care NYC Care will keep making health care a human right in New York City.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on this important topic. I'm happy to answer any questions.