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Community Groups Awarded Funds to Help Spread the Word about NY State of Health, the Official Health Plan Marketplace for New Yorkers

21 "Ambassadors for Coverage" Announced

The Empire Justice Center is pleased to announce that 21 organizations across New York have received funding to become Ambassadors for Coverage. This exciting initiative will support community outreach and education about NY State of Health, the Official Health Plan Marketplace, that enables consumers through its website portal, www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov, to shop, compare and enroll in quality, affordable health insurance. Grants of \$6500 will help community-based organizations get the word out about the newly available coverage options under NY State of Health. Through a competitive process, with funding from the New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth), Empire Justice Center has awarded these targeted grants to a range of groups including child care councils, local libraries, Community Action Programs and non profit organizations that provide services to immigrant and LGBTQ populations.

"This is a wonderful example of what a public-private partnership can achieve," said Donna Frescatore, executive director of NY State of Health. "The Ambassadors for Coverage program perfectly complements the efforts of our Navigators by adding "feet on the ground" as we continue through the enrollment period which runs through March 31. We applaud NYSHealth for their vision and for their investment in these important outreach efforts."

Designed as a companion to the Navigator organizations located across the state that provide enrollment assistance to New Yorkers seeking health plans that meet their needs, these new Ambassadors will work within their communities to help provide accurate and up to date information about how to access coverage through NY State of Health and direct consumers to the in-person assistors who can provide additional assistance.

Upon putting out a call for proposals, Empire Justice Center was flooded with applications from all over the state, making it incredibly difficult to choose just 21 awardees. Ultimately, the funded agencies represent a balance across the regions of the state, taking into account both urban and rural needs.

"We are so honored that we were chosen to run this exciting new program. The response and the caliber of applications received were overwhelming, and spoke to the need for this type of community based outreach. We applaud the New York State Health Foundation and New York State for conceiving it and we look forward to seeing it have a real impact in the communities we were able to fund," said Anne Erickson, President and CEO of the Empire Justice Center.

"The first three weeks of open enrollment showed New Yorkers' overwhelming enthusiasm for affordable coverage," said David Sandman, Senior Vice President, New York State Health Foundation. "Ambassadors can help turn that potential into reality."

The new Ambassadors will receive intensive training to ensure that they are able to respond to questions and help guide potential enrollees to the in-person assistors who have been trained by NY State of Health to enroll consumers into quality, low cost health plans. For questions about the program, see contact information above.

Ambassadors for Coverage Grantees

Organization	Region	Counties Served
African Refugee	NYC	Richmond
Alternatives Impact	Central NY/Finger Lakes	Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga, Tompkins
Brooklyn Queens Long Island Area Health	NYC	Kings
Buffalo Urban League	Western NY	Erie
Centro Civico	Capital District	Montgomery, Fulton, Albany, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer
Child Care Resources of Rockland	Capital District	Rockland
Child Care Solutions	Central NY/Finger Lakes	Onondaga, Cayuga
Community Access Services of WNY	Western NY	Erie
Cornell University Cooperative Extension	Western NY	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua
Cortland County Community Action Program	Central NY/Finger Lakes	Cortland
Healthy Latino Community, Inc.	Long Island	Nassau, Suffolk
Mental Health Association of Rochester/Monroe	Western NY	Livingston, Wyoming
New York Communities Organizing Fund	NYC	Kings
North East Community Center	Capital District	Columbia, Dutchess, Orange
Planned Parenthood of Nassau County	Long Island	Nassau
Queens Lesbian & Gay Community Center	NYC	Queens
Rochester Public Library	Central NY/Finger Lakes	Monroe
Sister to Sister International, Inc.	NYC	Westchester
St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center	Central NY/Finger Lakes	Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
Syracuse Model Neighborhood Facility	Central NY/Finger Lakes	Onondaga
Ulster County Community Action Committee	Capital District	Ulster

The Empire Justice Center is a statewide, multi-issue, multi-strategy, public interest law firm focused on changing the "systems" within which poor and low-income families live. With offices in Albany, Rochester, White Plains and on Long Island, Empire Justice Center seeks to protect and strengthen the legal rights of people in New York State who are poor, disabled or disenfranchised through: systems change advocacy, training and support to other advocates and organizations, and through high quality direct civil legal representation.

The New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth) is a private, statewide foundation dedicated to improving the health of all New Yorkers, especially the most vulnerable. Today, NYSHealth concentrates its work in three strategic priority areas: expanding health care coverage, improving diabetes prevention, and advancing primary care. The Foundation is committed to making grants, informing health care policy and practice, spreading effective programs to improve the health system, serving as a neutral convener of health leaders across the State, and providing technical assistance to our grantees and partners.