

Resolution of the Board of Health
Condemning Federal Attacks on Public Health Insurance Coverage and Urging Protections

WHEREAS, New York City Charter § 556 vests the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Health Department) with the responsibility of protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of everyone who lives in, works in, or visits New York City;

WHEREAS, the Health Department is responsible for determining the public health needs of the city and to prepare plans and programs addressing such needs;

WHEREAS, pursuant to New York City Charter § 558, the Board of Health is responsible for amending the Health Code and is authorized to publish additional provisions for security of life and health in the city and confer additional powers on the Department;

WHEREAS, the Health Department’s work includes policy and programmatic efforts to improve access to care for both insured and uninsured residents and to expand health insurance coverage via public education, insurance enrollment, and advocacy regarding eligibility and other policy reforms;

WHEREAS, in recent years, there have been historic improvements in increasing coverage in New York City, as a result of city, state, federal, and non-governmental actions to expand coverage and assistance;

WHEREAS, the Board of Health recognizes access to healthcare as a human right, consistent with article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the principles of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, and recognizes that such access must be affordable and available to all without discrimination;

WHEREAS, health insurance has been shown to be an important tool to both expand access to care, especially including primary and preventive care, and to protect patients from medical debt, impaired credit, and financial disaster;

WHEREAS, the Medicaid program, in particular, has provided health and financial security for millions of low-income New Yorkers since its launch sixty years ago, in 1966;

WHEREAS, the protection of these achievements in expanding insurance coverage is critical to achievement of the City’s Healthy NYC population health goals to equitably extend life expectancy;

WHEREAS, recent acts of Congress—most notably federal changes to health insurance eligibility and funding in Public Law 119-21 (H.R. 1 of 2025), including the mandate upon states to institute Medicaid “community engagement,” or work requirements with extensive administrative mandates to document beneficiaries’ fulfillment of or exemption of such requirements, as well as the failure to extend enhanced premium tax credits for exchange consumers—threaten to strip away health insurance from New Yorkers;

WHEREAS, the mandate to impose “community engagement” requirements for many beneficiaries

in the Medicaid program is a misguided, regressive policy, with projected damaging effects that will fall on low-income residents, who are disproportionately Black and Hispanic; is unprecedented in the Medicaid Act since the law was enacted in 1965; and lacks any basis in evidence as an intervention purported to promote employment and self-sufficiency, based on the experiences of the several states that have already implemented versions of Medicaid work requirements;

WHEREAS, the Medicaid “community engagement” requirements threaten to render many thousands of New Yorkers ineligible for Medicaid coverage simply because of administrative challenges, difficulties in documenting intermittent employment, and difficulty in documenting certain medical conditions and disabilities, and threaten to disrupt continuity of care for this population, absent mitigation measures by the State, City, and community-based partners;

WHEREAS, the aforementioned actions of Congress have focused on populations already at risk of poor health outcomes, such as those living in poverty, individuals with health conditions, individuals seeking sexual and reproductive health care, transgender youth and adults in need of gender-affirming care, immigrants, and public-benefits recipients;

WHEREAS, the Board of Health, in its June 5, 2025 statement (“The New York City Health Department’s Continued Work is Critical to Protecting Public Health”), directed that the Health Department “monitor the impact of proposed changes in legislation, regulations, policy, program, staffing and/or budgets,” “issue public statements,” and “engage the [New York State] Department of Health and otherwise take action to maintain the health and wellbeing of New Yorkers;”¹

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Health:

1. Condemns the recent federal attacks on public health insurance eligibility and funding, and urges Congress and federal agencies to listen to public health insurance beneficiaries and administrators and reconsider and reverse damaging changes;
2. Calls on the City and State governments to take actions to mitigate harms to insurance enrollment and access to care by seeking to (a) support as many beneficiaries as possible to maintain public health insurance coverage, and (b) help beneficiaries who lose coverage to affordably access necessary care without insurance coverage through programs such as NYC Care and community health centers or at hospitals with financial support for which patients may be entitled under the state Hospital Financial Assistance Law;
3. Requests that the Health Department develop and carry out a public education campaign and support efforts in collaboration with other City agencies, State agencies, community-based organizations, and healthcare providers;

¹ New York City Board of Health, Statement of the New York City Board of Health: The New York City Health Department’s Continued Work is Critical to Protecting Public Health (June 6, 2025), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/notice/2025/boh-statement-protecting-public-health.pdf>.

4. Requests that the Health Department report publicly available data, where feasible, demonstrating harms caused by the federal government's actions to reduce New Yorkers' health insurance coverage and access to health care, and the impacts on health equity;
5. Requests that the Health Department develop and carry out a plan to assist individuals at risk of losing Medicaid as a result of federal policy changes, including through public education, benefits enrollment, exemption documentation support, and care navigation, in collaboration with other City agencies, State agencies, community-based organizations, healthcare providers, and managed care organizations; and
6. Supports the Health Department in considering the actions it and the Board of Health can take to address the significant public health threats to New Yorkers from Congress' assault on Medicaid and insurance coverage.

Dated: May 19, 2026