



February 17, 2011

Nirav R. Shah, MD, MPH
Commissioner
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower
The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Dr. Shah:

I write to invite you to address the HIV Health and Human Services Planning Council of New York (Planning Council). The Planning Council is comprised of health care and service providers, advocates, and consumers and is charged with setting priorities for and allocating approximately \$100 million in funding from HRSA for treatment and care for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Members have several decades of experience in managing this very challenging chronic illness and are interested in some specific issues:

- Through the Affordable Care Act, President Obama has emphasized the importance of integrating health care – taking it from the silos in which it is currently housed and combining it into a more unified and coherent system – and of addressing health disparities and reducing co-morbidities. He has also discussed expanding eligibility for Medicaid so that a greater percentage of individuals who are currently uninsured will have access to care. We are eager to hear about your plan for restructuring New York’s current system of care to achieve these goals in the face of cuts to the Medicaid budget.
- We would like to hear more about your strategy for fighting HIV/AIDS in New York State and for enhancing access to and maintenance in care. In the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, President Obama called for closer collaboration between prevention and treatment and care in order to enhance the health and well-being of PLWHA and those who remain at increased risk for HIV. We would like to know more about how you plan to ensure comprehensive health care and supportive services for this vulnerable and disenfranchised population,

particularly during a serious budget crisis and during the transition of many Medicaid-eligible New Yorkers into managed care programs.

The Planning Council meets on the third Thursday of each month from 3:00-5:00. We would be delighted to welcome you to our gathering on March 17, April 21, or May 19.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Lesieur', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Lesieur
Community Co-Chair