



May 15, 2008

Speaker Christine Quinn
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Quinn:

On behalf of the HIV Health & Human Services Planning Council of New York, I write to ask you and your colleagues to provide \$1.5 million in fiscal year 08-09 to create a regional New York City community health planning agency. Until 1996, the NYC Health Systems Agency (HSA) engaged in planning for health care services delivery – specifically, it collected and examined data on health issues, evaluated hospitals' development plans, and made proposals for increasing health care in areas lacking sufficient medical capacity. Since the State terminated financing for HSAs in 1996, no single entity has engaged in comprehensive community health planning in New York City. The absence of community health planning means that some areas of the City have more services than necessary while others are insufficiently served. Many services are inadequately coordinated, and a substantial number of New Yorkers do not obtain needed care. This is particularly true for residents in disadvantaged neighborhoods and for populations that have high health needs such as people living with HIV/AIDS.

Members of the HIV Health & Human Services Planning Council of New York include service providers, physicians, advocates, and people living with HIV/AIDS, all of whom are thoroughly knowledgeable about the strengths and the shortcomings of the current care system. These individuals, who make decisions about the allocation of approximately \$110 million that New York City receives from the Health Services and Resources Administration, recognize that a centralized planning agency will be better able to coordinate among the needs of the wide variety of populations receiving HIV/AIDS treatment and care services in the City – both populations covered by HRSA funding and HIV-positive individuals whose care is funded by other sources.

I encourage you to apportion \$1.5 million for this project in order to supplement any New York State funds that come to the City for this end and also to hold public hearings on this topic following the release of a report by the United Hospital Fund on community health planning.

Thank you very much in advance for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Soraya Elcock
Community Co-Chair