Dear Governor Cuomo:

I am proud of the way New York has flattened the COVID-19 curve, and I look forward to a time when this pandemic is history.

But right now, many New Yorkers are suffering. Many of us are sick or still recovering from the coronavirus. Many of us have lost jobs and health insurance. Health care absolutely is essential for all of us, but many of us live with chronic conditions and access to quality healthcare is a matter of life and death. And our community health care centers, safety net and service organizations are our lifeline.

The budget you approved in April includes a plan – recommended by the Medicaid Redesign Team II - to transition the Medicaid pharmacy benefit from managed care to fee for service. This plan will dramatically compromise patient care and access to treatments for New Yorkers who may be already vulnerable, like people living with HIV as well as those seeking PrEP and PEP to prevent HIV.

Furthermore, the lifesaving community health centers where we seek care are facing immense financial challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes to the Medicaid program that you approved will only exacerbate these issues for community health centers and patients like me.

The MRT II’s plan to transition the Medicaid pharmacy benefit from managed care to fee for service, will **eliminate hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue** that community health centers – like the clinic I use, Callen-Lorde - receives from the 340B program in Managed Care.  These revenues fund the comprehensive range of services that thousands of patients like me use and benefit from – services such as care coordination, outreach, access to lower-cost prescriptions, insurance navigation and connection to the array of support services required to manage a chronic condition.

As a patient and as a New Yorker, I am urging you to reverse the pharmacy carve out plan. Funding from the 340B program – which will be all but eliminated if the budget’s plan is executed in April 2021 – is crucial for community health centers and most importantly community health.

Sincerely,