



LGBT Task Force

For Immediate Release:

January 12, 2015

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LGBT COMMUNITY LEADERS JOIN FORCES WITH LGBT ELECTED OFFICIALS IN NYC FOR SPECIAL HEALTH INSURANCE OUTREACH AND ENROLLMENT WEEK

Uninsured LGBT New Yorkers Urged to Sign Up for Affordable Care Act Health Insurance Plans by Feb. 15 Deadline

LGBT community leaders and elected officials today launched a week of activities designed to inform uninsured LGBT New Yorkers about their coverage options and help them apply before the Feb. 15 end of open enrollment for health plans through the NY State of Health marketplace. An estimated 1 in 4 LGBT people who would qualify for financial aid to buy health plans are still uninsured nationwide.

“This week, we are getting the word out to LGBT New Yorkers in all five boroughs: Get enrolled, get covered! All New Yorkers deserve quality, affordable health insurance,” said New York City Council Health Committee Chair Corey Johnson, who is facilitator of the Council’s LGBT Caucus. “There is a wide variety of services available to help LGBT New Yorkers get enrolled and every effort must be made to inform the community about them. This is particularly important because there are well-documented health disparities that affect our community.”

Today’s kickoff press conference is being held at Callen-Lorde Community Health Center in Chelsea, which provides health services to LGBT New Yorkers and also is a “navigator” agency certified by NY State of Health to help consumers enroll in health plans. Callen-Lorde is one of several LGBT-friendly navigator agencies participating in this week’s activities to provide welcoming spaces where LGBT people can get confidential, respectful help evaluating their options and applying for coverage.

“LGBT people, among other minority groups, have some of the highest uninsured rates in the country,” said Jay Laudato, Executive Director of Callen-Lorde. “At Callen-Lorde, we were thrilled to be able to enroll nearly 3,000 individuals - many of whom were previously uninsured - with low and no-cost health insurance products under the Affordable Care Act. While other barriers remain between LGBT communities and good health, we remain committed to reducing these barriers and linking folks with access to care. We look forward to continuing to partner with the New York State Health Foundation, Out2Enroll and others in reducing the number of at-risk LGBT people in New York State and beyond.”

Other LGBT-friendly agencies participating in the week’s activities include the LGBT Community Center in Manhattan, Voces Latinas in Queens, GMHC, Mount Sinai Beth Israel, the Community Service Society and Make the Road NY, which has offices in Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island. Information and enrollment events are scheduled in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and Westchester County. All of these organizations belong to the LGBT Task Force of Health Care for All NY, which has organized the week’s activities.

“We want uninsured LGBT New Yorkers to know that you can apply for coverage without fear of discrimination or being turned down because of pre-existing conditions,” said LGBT Task Force Co-Chair Lois Uttley. She noted that same-sex married couples and any children they may have are eligible for family coverage. Under a new state policy, private health plans being offered in the NY State of Health marketplace now must cover medically-necessary gender transition services. The state has also proposed lifting some of the existing restrictions on Medicaid coverage for medically-necessary transgender care.

LGBT people can ask questions and begin the application process in confidential consultations with enrollers at the following events this week:

Monday, January 12, 6 to 8 p.m.

Make the Road New York, 92-10 Roosevelt Ave., Jackson Heights, Queens

Featured speaker: Maria Reinoso, Make the Road New York Enrollment Specialist

Tuesday, January 13, 2 to 4 p.m.

Make the Road New York, 161 Port Richmond Ave., Staten Island

Featured speaker: Cristina Clavijo, Make the Road New York Enrollment Specialist

Wednesday, January 14, 6-9 p.m.

Freidman Conference Center at the Phillips Ambulatory Care Center, Mount Sinai Beth Israel, 10 Union Sq. East, Manhattan

Featured speakers: Comedian Dana Friedman (emcee); Lois Uttley, Co-chair, Health Care for All NY LGBT Task Force; Kellan Baker, Out2Enroll and Center for American Progress; Dr. Barbara Warren, LGBT Director, Office for Diversity and Inclusion, Mount Sinai Health System; Paul Zucker, Chair, Mount Sinai Beth Israel Diversity Council

Thursday, January 15, 2-6 p.m. drop-in hours, 6-7:30 p.m. presentation

LOFT Center, 252 Bryant Ave, White Plains

Featured speaker: Liza Lederer, Community Organizer, Raising Women’s Voices-NY

Friday, January 16, 6 to 8 p.m.

Make the Road New York, 301 Grove Street, Bushwick, Brooklyn

Featured speakers: Mark Hannay, Director, Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign; Arline Cruz, Make the Road New York Enrollment Specialist

LGBT Health Insurance Outreach and Enrollment Week is being organized by the LGBT Task Force of Health Care for All New York (HCFANY, www.hcfany.org), as part of a national week of activities, endorsed by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, to reach uninsured LGBT Americans with information about new health insurance coverage options created under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Organizations involved in planning and coordinating this week of events in New York include the Beth Israel Medical Center/Mount Sinai Health System, Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, Community Service Society of New York, LGBT Community Center, Make the Road New York, Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign, Raising Women’s Voices-New York and Voces Latinas.