

Commission on the Public's Health System

a letter to prospective members from CPHS board, staff and members

Welcome, we hope that you will decide to join us in the very large mission of fighting for equal access to health care services for everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, language spoken, diagnosis, or ability to pay. Although New York City is far ahead of other parts of this country on health coverage and access to care, there are still too many communities that are medically underserved and where access is difficult. The disparities in access to and outcomes of care are very glaring and need to be addressed. We have the East Side of Manhattan which we call “Bed Pan Alley” and then have low-income, medically underserved, immigrant and communities of color, where hospitals and health clinics have been closed. CPHS operates on a city-wide basis, working with our board and membership, as well as with many community organizations and unions. To accomplish our goals we organize, or join, coalitions with a similar mission.

In 2011, CPHS will be 20 years old. We were born with an organizing mission to prevent the privatization of the public hospital system. We believe in, and support, public health programs and community-based health care services. We strongly believe that all community residents should have a place at the table when decisions are made about their health care.

cphs*
*Putting the public back in public health

c p h s p r o j e c t s a n d m i s s i o n s t a t e m e n t

At the Commission on the Public's Health System, we "fight for equal access to quality health care for everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, language spoken, diagnosis, or the ability to pay."

The Commission on the Public's Health System (CPHS), founded in 1991, is a citywide, community-based membership health advocacy organization.

CPHS is a voice for the public health and hospital system, a voice for the allocation of public funding in the state and city budgets; a strong supporter of community organizing, and supporter of the health care safety net and access to health care services for everyone, particularly in low-income, medically underserved, immigrant and communities of color.

CPHS is committed to ensuring that the voices of medically underserved communities, especially their need for safety net health care providers, are heard. As a membership organization with an active board of directors, CPHS has many routes to understanding the important issues confronting many communities and prioritizes extensive community involvement in its numerous community health

c p h s p r o j e c t s a n d m i s s i o n s t a t e m e n t

Mobilizing our Board and our Members

CPHS holds eleven monthly meetings, inviting guest speakers, discussing priorities and gathering volunteers for projects, such as:



Fighting for Health Reform. CPHS was actively involved in advocating for passage of national health reform, to expand health insurance coverage and improve access to health care services. The Commission on the Public's Health System produced and widely distributed a Policy Statement on Health Reform that broadened the issues people were talking about to include:

*eliminating disparities,
training more primary care practitioners,
training more underrepresented minority practitioners, and
making the coverage of U.S. residents more inclusive but not limiting it to its citizens.*

Currently, we are doing educational sessions for organizations on the meaning of the Affordable Care Act/ Health Reform and providing updated information through our list-serve.

Advocating for Community Health.

Southeast Queens United In Support of Health (SQUISH)– CPHS is an active member of SQUISH, a community coalition in Southeast Queens. When the closings of Mary Immaculate and St. John's Hospitals were announced, CPHS served as a bridge between the community and the State Health Department to raise awareness of the impact of hospital closings in the medically underserved community. This resulted in a Community Health Needs Analysis of Queens by the SDOH and \$30 million were made available for primary care.

Beyond Ground Zero (BGZ)- CPHS continues to work as a part of the BGZ coalition in its continuing efforts to ensure that all 9/11 clean-up workers and low-income residents of the Lower East Side and Chinatown receive screening and treatment for post-9/11 illnesses and problems. CPHS played an important role in encouraging Bellevue Hospital, to begin providing testing and services for residents and local workers who were physically affected by 9-11. This resulted in a groundbreaking collaborative program between BGZ and Bellevue Hospital known as the 9-11 Community Health Initiative. This program later got funded by the NYC and renamed the WTC Environmental Health Center. It is the only 9-11 health program open to residents and clean-up workers.

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Fighting for Our Children's Health.

In collaboration with five borough coalitions, CPHS coordinated a Child Health Initiative which organized celebrations in each borough, promoted public health insurance and access to a "medical home", surveyed parents in 12 languages and set up 12 focus groups with young people. This effort resulted in a report of the findings and a Child/Teen/Family Health Policy Agenda for NYC.

The Child Health Initiative and CPHS formed the Taste for Change Coalition to focus on young people and communities working together to combat obesity/overweight and related conditions such as diabetes and asthma. CPHS is currently working on proposals for a youth-led project so that youth can develop culturally competent projects and messages to reach their communities.

Every year, CPHS fights to put funding for Child Health Clinics back into the city budget.



Cultural Competence. With funding from the United Hospital Fund, CPHS with the Brooklyn Perinatal Network and the Bronx Health Link developed a survey to interview people around the city about what makes a person feel comfortable in a health care setting. With help from community organizations and volunteers, 117 people were interviewed in 4 languages. The survey results were tabulated and presented to the Child Health Policy Committee. A

checklist was developed to serve as the basis of visits to provider sites. The report, *Culturally Competent Care: Some examples of What Works* presents the stories of providers that have successfully become culturally and linguistically competent. It is possible for all healthcare providers!



c p h s p r o j e c t s a n d m i s s i o n s t a t e m e n t



Protecting the Safety Net.

The Commission on the Public's Health System has long advocated for major changes in the allocation of the state's Charity Care pools. The distribution of nearly \$1 billion/yr in funding is scandalous. A report, CHCCDP, done by CPHS, resulted in a tightening of the requirements for the spending of Charity Care funds. Now 10% of the money is allocated on the basis of care to uninsured patients. CPHS continues to fight for the remaining 90% to be accurately reported by hospitals by the number of services provided for the uninsured by working with allies to develop a message and to organize a campaign to fight for more changes in the Charity Care pools.

Supporter of Health and Hospitals Corporation. CPHS has been a major supporter of NYC's public hospital system, HHC and its efforts to improve quality of care, safety for patients and access to services. HHC hospitals serve a large percentage of Medicaid patients and the uninsured. However, this year HHC has an enormous deficit of over \$1 billion that could result in lay-offs, consolidations and closings of services. HHC contracted with a consultant to develop a report for the "Road Ahead" that calls for the closing of 5 Child Health Clinics and a dental clinic, the consolidation of services, the privatization of some services and the lay-off of many workers. CPHS initiated a petition against the clinics closing, developed a summary of the recommendations in the consultant report

Being on the Frontlines of the City Budget. CPHS organized and coordinates a growing



People's Budget Coalition for Public Health (PBC). PBC is an alliance of community and labor organizations united around preserving our city's public health funding. The Mayor's proposed public health budget has (once again) targeted cuts at important services for women and children; people with chronic diseases or disabilities and services that provide care or support for immigrant and communities of color. PBC identifies sources of revenue so cuts are not needed, holds meetings to inform City Council-members, mobilizes for the Council's oversight budget hearings and persistently advocates the need for public health funding.

People's Budget Coalition for Public Health

benefits of membership



CPHS MEMBERS:

- Make a commitment to racial and socio-economic justice in health care
- Become informed about current health policy issues such as helping the uninsured and underinsured get access to health care, cultural competence in provider settings, health care reform, disparities in care, Charity Care pools
- Become strong advocates on issues that are in the interest of themselves and the communities they serve.
- **Fight the good fight**
- Collaborate with other advocacy and community organizations
- Enhance city-wide networking
- Enhance community level networking through participatory problem solving processes
- Enhance networks through community capacity building and problem solving
- Participate in collective and collaborative advocacy for public health improvement, access and funding.
- Develop new social network linkages
- Receive updated information on federal, state and local budgets
- Resource sharing
- Monthly membership meetings, sharing current information and planning strategies to impact public health





*Putting the public back in public health

Membership Form/ E-mail sign-up

**Return via e-mail to ladyhealth@cphsnyc.org or
by mail to CPHS, 45 Clinton Street, New York, NY 10002.**

- Yes!** I would like to sign up to become a member of the Commission on the Public's Health System.

First Name _____ **Last Name** _____

Phone Number _____

Organization (if applicable) _____

Address _____ **City** _____

State _____ **Zip Code** _____

My E-mail Address is _____

- Please **add me** to the E-mail list-serve. The e-mail list-serve will keep me updated on important news and concerns about access to health care issues/topics.
- I would like to receive CPHS updates by mail. Please **add me** to the mailing list.

As a member, I would like to participate in or assist CPHS with: (check all that apply)

- speaking at events participating in legislative visits community education
- participating in mobilizations setting up events, forums outreach
- distributing CPHS information at events and other functions notifying media
- writing articles for the newsletter translating documents
- only receiving information attending meetings
- other _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

**Thank you for joining us in the fight and making a commitment to our mission!
Together, we can put the public back in public health!**