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While New York Sees Improvement in Child Coverage, Overall Number of Uninsured Increases

Underscoring the need for action, the rate of uninsured New Yorkers jumped by 2% this past year as Congress continues to struggle with health care reform issues. The U.S Census Bureau announced yesterday that there are now 46.3 million Americans living without health insurance. This includes 2.7 million uninsured individuals in New York. Uninsurance affects all of us, including our family members, friends, neighbors and fellow community members who are forced to gamble that they won't get sick or injured and are just one health crisis away from financial ruin.

HCFANY was disheartened to see the number of uninsured adults (age 19-64) take a one year leap from 17.2% to 19%. "This increase reflects what we hear from men and women all cross the state—the system is broken; more and more New Yorkers are losing their jobs in this tough economic time and are finding themselves without affordable health care options" said Elisabeth Benjamin, Vice President of Health Initiatives at the Community Service Society.

Of particular concern for New Yorkers is that non-citizens are more than three times as likely to not have insurance than citizens. "We know non-citizens are less likely to be offered insurance through an employer, and face greater barriers to accessing public insurance," said Jenny Rejeske of the New York Immigration Coalition. "But immigrants want the chance to pay for health insurance they can afford, like everyone else, so that they and their families can be healthy. This report only emphasizes the need for a health care system that works for everyone."

While the number of uninsured adults increased, there was improvement in the rate of health insurance coverage for children. The number of uninsured children in New York decreased from 9.2% in 2008 to 7.3% this year. "We are happy to see that New York's expansion of Child Health Plus has lead to a decrease in the number of uninsured children, and as a result, more children are now able to access health care. New York's efforts underscore the importance-- and effectiveness-- of providing every child with access to comprehensive and affordable health coverage. We must continue to focus on getting every child and their parents insured" said Jennifer Marino Rojas of the Children's Defense Fund - New York.

The new census data underscores HCFANY's commitment to advancing health reform in New York and nationwide—together we can work toward a solution that will provide affordable comprehensive coverage to all Americans.

About Health Care For All New York (HCFANY)

HCFANY is a coalition of more than 80 groups in New York State who are working to achieve affordable quality health care for all New Yorkers. HCFANY is working hard to ensure that federal reform happens this year. For more information, visit www.hcfany.org