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**CSS Statewide Survey Finds New Yorkers in Four Disparate Regions of the State Are Desperate for Affordable Health Options and Want Elected Officials to Act Now**

New Yorkers do not want state officials to wait and see what happens with national health reform before acting at the state level. They also say federal proposals that would require families to pay for coverage need to be more generous than currently proposed by Congress. A new survey released today by the Community Service Society (CSS) examines New Yorkers' views from four different regions of the state about health care costs, and their views about making health care more affordable.

Lake Research Partners on behalf of CSS conducted the statewide survey of 1,003 New Yorkers. The purpose of the survey is to understand how much New Yorkers can afford to spend on health care and gauge support for various ways to increase access to affordable care. The survey was conducted in New York City, Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and on Long Island.

"This report reinforces what we hear across the state: New Yorkers are anxious about the rising costs of health care; they are paying more, getting less, and are worried a federal solution won't come in time to help them," said David R. Jones, president and CEO of CSS. "The national health reform debate needs to develop a solution that will benefit New Yorkers."

The survey found that New Yorkers were willing to pay an average of \$206 a month for health insurance, with individuals in New York City and upstate rural areas able to afford less on average (\$177 and \$189, respectively). Given this data, it is not surprising that 71 percent of New Yorkers say paying \$420 per month for a family of three for health insurance – which is currently proposed in the U.S. House of Representatives' national health reform bill – is too much.

"The affordability measures proposed for national reform are of real concern to high-cost states like New York," said Elisabeth Benjamin, Vice President of Health Initiatives at CSS. "Our elected representatives must be mindful of the dueling reality between New York's

private insurance costs relative to New York family budgets—an individual mandate in New York, as proposed in every federal bill, must be made workable.”

The survey also found that nearly 74 percent of New Yorkers say they would support a new option to allow them to purchase public health insurance on a voluntary basis through existing state programs like Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus in order to make health insurance more affordable.

The survey found that 81 percent of New Yorkers want affordable health care to be a top or high priority with their elected officials. According to CSS, survey results send a clear message: state-based reform cannot wait for federal action and we need to explore current options to ensure that affordable, comprehensive health and insurance reform happens now.

To download a copy of the report, go to <http://www.cssny.org/advocacy/cornerstone/>

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*For 160 years, the Community Service Society of New York has been the leading voice on behalf of low-income New Yorkers and continues to advocate for the economic security of the working poor in the nation’s largest city.*