

Healthy CUNY

Advocates' Corner

A newsletter from the Healthy CUNY Advocates



Thank you for joining us on our first newsletter launch, where you will receive updates on our advocacy and outreach work, information on essential needs resources at CUNY, new Healthy CUNY projects, and other updates.

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NYC CARE Your Key to the City's Health Care

Healthy CUNY

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Healthcare Team, Fall 2022



Becoming Healthy CUNY

WRITTEN BY NICK FREUDENBERG

Healthy CUNY works to assist students throughout CUNY to overcome health and social obstacles to academic success. Its ambitious goal is to enable all CUNY students to achieve their potential for health as well as academic and life success. Healthy CUNY started in 2006 when a few CUNY faculty, students, and staff in the Chancellor's Office became concerned about the rising rates of diabetes and other diet-related conditions in New York City.

To help the CUNY community take on diabetes, we organized diabetes prevention and management workshops for students, faculty, and staff; led campaigns to make healthy food available and affordable at CUNY; and distributed educational materials. Later, we also helped to organize a campaign to make CUNY what was at the time the largest tobacco-free university system.

In 2010, CUNY's Chancellor, Matthew Goldstein, asked us to conduct a survey on the frequency of food insecurity at CUNY. He requested because several campus presidents had told him many more hungry students were showing up at events where free food was served. He wondered whether recent increases in tuition and the deeper effects of the 2008 financial crisis contributed to food insecurity.

Our 2011 survey, the first of several Healthy CUNY has conducted, found—to our shock and dismay—almost 40% of CUNY students reported that they experienced food insecurity in the past 12 months. Since then, we have been working to document, reduce and ultimately eliminate food insecurity among CUNY students. Our 2011 report was one of the first systematic studies of the prevalence of food insecurity and hunger among college students. Many other campuses and national organizations have surveyed students in the last decade.



Our surveys also identified other serious problems facing our students, including depression, anxiety, and lack of health care, including sexual and reproductive health care. This led us to focus on and expand Healthy CUNY to our current mission: creating a system of care and support that assists students in preventing or successfully managing health and social problems that undermine academic and life success. Rather than focusing on a single problem like diabetes or tobacco, we now seek to tackle the constellation of the issues that can disrupt education. Our targets include depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, lack of health insurance and/or a regular health provider, unsupported parenting of young children, partner violence, housing instability and homelessness, and food insecurity and hunger. We recognize that these problems have deep roots in poverty, racism, sexism, and increasing inequality in New York City and the nation.

In the last two and a half years, as we have all been forced to encounter the COVID-19 pandemic, Healthy CUNY has learned additional lessons. First, we have seen that the foundations of well-being for many of our students are precarious. A lost job, a child unable to go to school, a missed rent payment, or an unexpected medical bill can force many students to drop out of school, increase their work hours, or encounter serious psychological problems. To build on what we have learned since 2006, we have created CUNY CARES (Comprehensive Access to Resources for Essential Services), which will be launched this semester. In the next newsletter, I will describe our new approach in more detail.



Nick Freudenberg
Faculty Director, Healthy CUNY,
and CUNY Distinguished
Professor of Public Health

About the Healthy CUNY Advocates program

Healthy CUNY Advocates are CUNY students who provide information and assistance to their peers about health and essential needs resources. Essential needs include healthy, affordable food and affordable health care (including mental health services) that can help students stay healthy and focus on their academic goals. In addition, advocates are trained to support their peers and direct them to resources already available on campus (such as campus resource centers, food pantries, counseling, and health services) or in the community. Advocates understand what it's like to be a CUNY student and can relate to some of the challenges that students face. Advocates receive payment and training to do this work. If you are interested in learning more, email healthycuny@sph.cuny.edu.

Meet our Staff



Patricia Lamberson
Deputy Director
Healthy CUNY



Valerie Peter Chong
Project Coordinator



Holly Isenberg
Social Media &
Evaluation Liaison



Karla Ignacio
Program Assistant



Fanni Sampson
Field Supervisor



Micah Bookman
Health Insurance Leader

MEET OUR ADVOCATES



BRONX TEAM



Sovira Chaudhry
Team Leader
Lehman College



Lo Anderson
Team Leader
Hostos CC



Kacey Witter
Hostos CC



Brittany Lanzano
Hostos CC



Alexia Matthew
Hostos CC



Marlelis Hernandez
Bronx CC



Amaris Martinez
Lehman College

QUEENS TEAM



Yukari Izumiyama
Team Leader
John Jay College



Liliana Cornejo
Team Leader
York College



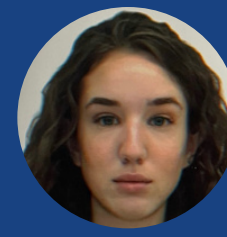
Shrabuny Jalal
Queens College



Jade Lymberopoulos
Queens College



Diana Moreno
LaGuardia CC



Sara Pusonja
Queens College

MEET OUR ADVOCATES

**Healthy
CUNY**
promoting health
for academic success

HEALTHCARE TEAM



Micah Bookman
Team Leader
School of Public Health



Claribel Casco
Brooklyn College



Chaamy Yapa
Baruch College
Macaulay Honors

BROOKLYN/ MANHATTAN TEAM



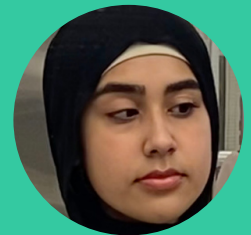
Anthony Maltese
Team Leader
School of Public Health



Kailey Volpetti
Team Leader
College of Staten Island



Jannett Akent
City Tech



Nafisa Hasan
Baruch College



Shatisha Bryant
Brooklyn College



Harmain Munir
Brooklyn College



Chelsea Blaney
Brooklyn College



Onyekachi Okeke
Hunter College

ADVOCATE HIGHLIGHT



Yukari Izumiyama

Healthy CUNY prides itself on being a university-wide initiative that is led by and serves the students who attend CUNY colleges. It is through their efforts that Healthy CUNY has been able to achieve such high success in its work to reduce health-related barriers to educational achievement. Today, Healthy CUNY sheds light on one of its outstanding advocates, Yukari Izumiyama, a LaGuardia Community College alum whose passion for food justice began when she was only five years old.

Interview conducted by Nafisa Hasan and Onyekachi Okeke. Article written by Eliam Jung. Contains responses that are either directly quoted or paraphrased.

“Please tell us how you began your CUNY adventure. How was your experience?”

I recently graduated from LaGuardia Community College. Through CUNY Service Corps, I got introduced to Healthy CUNY and applied to it. I wanted to apply for Healthy CUNY because I have always been passionate about food justice issues. So I started as an intern. It was great because I got to meet students from different campuses.

If I didn't work at Healthy CUNY, I would've never had the opportunity to meet so many people. And prior to COVID-19, we visited different resource centers.

“Can you give an overview of your work regarding food justice at LaGuardia?”

It's not like a big, big food justice [program] on campus. We have a separate student group that is run by Food Management majors. So I kind of know them, but not really. I focus a lot of my efforts on reaching out to the student government, my fellow classmates, etc. Since everything is online, I give presentations during class.

“What does food justice mean to you, and why is it important?”

I chose food justice mainly for personal reasons. But besides that, I know a lot of CUNY students need resources, but they don't know where to go. I feel like there's a gap because the resources are there—the students just don't know. So I think it's important and beneficial to fill that gap... that is one of my reasons and why I'm so passionate.

“What's one thing you've seen a positive change and one thing you believe needs more work?”

I think that over a few years, more and more people have become aware of the SNAP program. They know about the issues and the support that is available. A negative would be the gap that I mentioned.

“Students know *of* the support, but they don't know if they're eligible or where to go.”

If students knew that they were eligible, they wouldn't need to work three jobs and take 12 credits. I wish we could provide more information and ways for them to sign up because they are eligible. They just don't know.

“Then how can someone help in these advocacy efforts? Which methods are effective?”

Personal communication. One of my colleagues ran this test where she sent emails to 5000 students. She also called them. Over half of the students didn't even open the emails; speaking to them directly was much more effective. We need more 1-on-1 communication, especially since there's a stigma surrounding food justice. Also, since we're online, some students find it more comfortable to speak over Zoom since they don't need to show their faces.

“Are there any important resources LaGuardia offers that students should be aware of?”

Yes, there's a lot. They have legal services, housing, healthcare, a veteran's office, and an LGBTQ+ community center. They also partner with Food Bank NY, and they're trying to work with New York Common Pantry. I know there have been pop-up events on campus where different student clubs and groups come and give fruits and vegetables every month. I don't know how many students know of these, but they really should.

Resource Highlight - NYC CARE

What is NYC Care?

NYC Care is a healthcare access program available to New York City residents ineligible for health insurance or New York City residents for whom health insurance is unaffordable (i.e., greater than 8% of their income).

What benefits can students get when they call NYC Care?

NYC Care provides:

- An assigned primary care clinician at one of NYC Health + Hospitals 70+ patient care locations; new patients are guaranteed an appointment with their primary care provider within two weeks of enrollment in the program.
- Comprehensive primary and preventive care services.
- Access to NYC Health + Hospitals specialty care and behavioral health care services.
- Access to a 24/7-member service hotline.
- Access to affordable prescription benefits.
- A dedicated membership card.
- A welcome packet and education materials help members understand their benefits and responsibilities under the plan.

Who qualifies for NYC Care?

You must live in the five boroughs of New York City

Must not qualify for any health insurance plan available in New York State

Not being able to afford health insurance based on government guidelines

How long does it take to enroll in NYC Care?

You can access health care now. If you are uninsured and live within the five boroughs, call 1- 646-NYC-CARE. NYC Care representative will be able to help you through the enrollment process. The membership card and enrollment packet can be mailed approximately 10 to 15 days to the mailing address provided by the patient, including shelters and trusted CBOs.

Who has access to the information I provide to NYC Care?

NYC Health + Hospitals and NYC Care are committed to ensuring the privacy of their patients and do not record immigration information about their patients. Furthermore, as an NYC Health + Hospitals program, NYC Care will protect enrollees' personal information to the fullest extent of the law.

How much do I have to pay for this service?

Enrollment is free, and there are no membership fees, monthly fees, or premiums. The cost to receive care will be based on a sliding scale, depending on your household size and income.

What services does NYC Care cover?

NYC Care offers a wide range of health care services available at over 70+ patient care sites across the five boroughs, including:

- Comprehensive primary and preventive care services, including chronic disease testing and management, as well as age-appropriate screenings
- Mental health and addiction treatment
- Women's Health
- Vision
- Pharmacy
- Specialty services: • Cardiology (heart) • Rheumatology (arthritis) • Orthopedics (skeletal) • Podiatry (feet) • Gastroenterology (stomach) • General Surgery • Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) • Psychiatry

What are the immigration status guidelines?

NYC Care is not exclusively for New Yorkers with any particular immigration status. Information will be protected to the full extent of the law, and H+H will vigorously defend confidentiality.

I want to sign up for NYC Care. How and when can I enroll?

Call (646) 614-CUNY (646-614-2869) to make an appointment in all five boroughs.

RESOURCE PAGE

Please take a look at the featured resources for this issue. We are confident your students will greatly benefit from them.



CUNY
SPH GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH & HEALTH POLICY

Healthy
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promoting health
for academic success

Tips & Resources to succeed at CUNY

<https://tinyurl.com/CunyThriving>

The College Student Pantry

Run by student volunteers, this food pantry program is for College and Graduate Students in NYC!

For further information, check out their website:
collegestudentpantry.org

Healthy
CUNY

A food pantry for
students by students

Get Support to succeed in college and beyond

Physical health and Mental health are inseparably linked.

Call 311 for enrollment in a public health insurance program in your neighborhood, or text "CoveredNYC" to 877- 877

Healthy
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text "CUNY" to 741741
to initiate a free and confidential conversation

Insurance Information & CUNY
Mental Health Support line



Healthy CUNY Student
Resource Guide

Thank you for reading; see you next time!