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New York City Council Introduces Legislation to Create Office of Transplant Equity

New York, NY -- November 16, 2023 -- Today, [legislation](#) was introduced by the New York City Council to create a new program to help ensure that life-saving and money-saving organ transplants are equitably accessible to all New Yorkers, including members of immigrant and low-income communities that frequently face major barriers to even receiving an evaluation for kidney and other transplants.

The bill would create a new Office of Organ Transplant Equity within the Department of Health charged with providing accessible information and specialized care coordination to all New Yorkers about life-saving organ transplant options available in every borough. The Office would also help uninsured and underinsured New Yorkers obtain necessary insurance to cover organ transplant surgeries and follow-up care. Additionally, the new program would coordinate education for healthcare providers at dialysis centers and hospital-based transplant centers about how to eliminate barriers to transplant care for underserved communities.

Earlier this year, [a report](#) published by New York Lawyers for the Public Interest found that for patients with serious kidney disease, organ transplants are far more effective in increasing life expectancy and numerous studies show that transplants are far less costly than long-term dialysis treatments. By enabling additional New Yorkers to receive necessary life-extending care, this bill would extend lives, advance equity in transplant care, and could pay for itself and create significant savings for New York City's public health system.

“As a registered nurse and a public servant, I've witnessed firsthand the disparities in organ transplantation and the unique challenges faced by our diverse communities. With the establishment of the Office of Organ Transplant Equity, we take a critical step towards ensuring that all New Yorkers, regardless of their background or economic status, have equitable access to life-saving transplants. This office will not only coordinate care but also break down barriers, educate on rights and options, and work tirelessly to navigate the complex healthcare landscape. It's about saving lives and upholding the dignity of every person in need of a transplant,” said **Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse**.

“Every New Yorker should have equal access to organ transplantation regardless of economic status or zip code,” said **Council Member Lynn Schulman, Chair of the Health Committee**. “Intro 1250, which establishes the Office of Organ Transplant Equity will level the playing field and help coordinate care and educate the public on what options are available to them. Healthcare is a human right, and this bill will ensure we are working towards equitable and accessible care for all. I applaud my colleagues, Council Members Mercedes Narcisse and

Shahana Hanif for their work on this legislation and look forward to its passage in the coming months.”

"We thank Council Members Narcisse, Hanif, and Schulman for introducing this important legislation which will advance the rights of people who need organ transplants," said **Karina Albistegui-Adler, Senior Health Advocate at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.** "Navigating our fragmented healthcare system when you're so sick that you need an organ transplant to survive is difficult enough but to do so in the face of racialized bias and unnecessary administrative barriers at the point of care is nearly impossible. This bill will help ensure that New Yorkers with chronic illnesses can thrive in their communities and return to where they want to be – at home and in their workplaces."

"I enthusiastically support this bill – which has the power to make a critical impact on equity in transplantation; for decades, we have seen disparities in access to transplant due to the multi-step complexities of navigating the transplant journey. Having a centralized infrastructure to aid individuals navigate structural barriers to transplant care is a critical step toward the equity we need in our transplant system." **Dinushika Mohottige, Nephrologist, NYC.**

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