

Quinn Launches Health Care Workforce Group

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City Council Speaker Christine Quinn has followed up on a promise to help prepare New Yorkers for the coming changes to the healthcare industry.

Quinn announced a new partnership today to help prioritize retraining for current healthcare workers to meet new standards and incentivize jobs in the industry. The effort comes as city leaders seek to capitalize on the expected demand for healthcare jobs stemming from the rollout of the national Affordable Care Act and the state's Medicaid redesign.

Quinn first announced the new partnership, called the New York Health Employment Coalition, during her State of the City address in February.

"If we get this right, it will mean thousands of new job opportunities for working and middle class New Yorkers," Quinn said when she introduced her proposal in February. "If we get it wrong, we'll see major disruptions in our healthcare system, and healthcare professionals could actually lose their jobs.

The coalition is co-chaired by Health Committee Chairwoman Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Greater New York Hospital Association President Kenneth Raske, 1199 SEIU Training and Employment Funds Executive Director Deborah King and the City University of New York's Dean of Health Bill Ebenstein.

King and Ebenstein also sat on the State's Medicaid Redesign Team's Workforce Flexibility group, which was also charged with redefining providers' roles and ensuring training requirements match up with the goals outlined by Governor Andrew Cuomo's 2011 executive order.

Quinn's coalition aims to coordinate its efforts with government agencies, healthcare groups and unions to strengthen the healthcare workforce as the legislative reforms roll out. During her February address, Quinn said the coalition's first project would be to translate English-only educational materials for home care workers as they catch up to new state standards. The Speaker's office confirmed that would still be a priority for the coalition, and that they are in talks with providers and the State to figure out the most efficient way to proceed.

"We'll make sure that as many as 3,000 non-English speakers keep their jobs, and patients don't lose their culturally competent home care workers," Quinn said in February.

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