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New Yorkers for a Modern Health Code Launches to Advocate Science-Based Health Regulations

New nonprofit to focus on modernizing regulations adopted at the beginning of the HIV/AIDS crisis

NEW YORK, NY — New Yorkers for a Modern Health Code, Inc. today announced its launch and the debut of its website, modernhealthcode.org, to advance a modern, science-based approach to New York public health regulation.

The nonprofit's initial focus will be New York State Sanitary Code Part 24 and related regulations that continue to shape how the state approaches public health in certain adult establishments like bathhouses. It will organize support for the Public Health Modernization Act sponsored by State Senator Erik Bottcher and State Assemblyman Tony Simone, develop a framework for the replacement regulations required by that legislation, and advocate for other administrative methods for changing the code that do not rely on the legislature.

"New York's public health rules should reflect scientific advancements and the realities of 2026," said Joe Hickerson, Executive Director of New Yorkers for a Modern Health Code. "We will make the case for modern regulations that protect both public health and the civil liberties of consenting adults rather than rely on the thinking and assumptions of 1985."

Through its website, the organization will publish research, share opportunities for public participation, and provide updates on its work to support modernization of outdated health provisions and the development of a new regulatory framework for adult bathhouses. The organization will bring together public health professionals, legal and policy experts, and other community stakeholders to identify the most effective and workable approaches.

"There is growing momentum for the Department of Health to replace a 40-year old relic in the code with new regulations based on current science, and I'm thrilled to have an ally in this effort who can help advocate for this change from all angles," said State Senator Erik Bottcher.

New Yorkers for a Modern Health Code does not finance, own, or operate any establishment. Its work is solely focused on ensuring new regulations are grounded in modern science and clear, enforceable public health standards.

"A modern regulatory system can be more straightforward about protecting public health while also allowing legal businesses to open and operate," Hickerson said.

Anyone interested in learning more about the organization's mission, strategy and work can do so at modernhealthcode.org.

About New Yorkers for a Modern Health Code

New Yorkers for a Modern Health Code, Inc. is a New York nonprofit organization working to modernize public-health regulations adopted in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Through research, education, community engagement, and lawful policy advocacy, the organization seeks an science-based regulatory framework that advances public health, dignity, clarity, and accountability.

New Yorkers for a Modern Health Code has applied for recognition of federal tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Its application is pending; the organization will make all required disclosures concerning contributions and tax treatment.

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