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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Legal Aid Lauds Governor Hochul for Signing Historic Statewide Legislation to Permit Certain Homeless and Runaway Youth the Right to Consent to Their Own Healthcare

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** applauded Governor Hochul for signing critical legislation ([S8937/A9604](#)) which would allow decisionally-capable homeless youth, as well as runaway and homeless youth who receive services at an approved runaway and homeless youth crisis services program or a transitional independent living support program, to consent to their own health care, including gender affirming care. In fact, LGBTQ+ youth are much more likely to experience homelessness than their straight and cisgender peers, and this legislation will enable them to access much needed health care.

Timely treatment and preventative care are critical for young people's health and well-being, and enable them to excel in school and beyond. For too long, homeless and runaway youth have been unable to access any health care in New York unless or until their situation becomes critical. This is because they do not have parents available to consent to care for them, and because homeless and runaway youth service providers are not legal guardians and cannot consent for their care.

"Today New York makes extraordinary strides in centering and expanding the healthcare options available to homeless and runaway youth. Healthcare needs do not stop when young people do not have present or supportive parents or guardians to assist with their care," said **Heidi Bramson, staff attorney in the Health Law Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. "The Legal Aid Society thanks Governor Hochul for enacting legislation that increases access to care for homeless and runaway youth who demonstrate they are capable of making their own health care decisions."

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 145 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org