



NYAPRS and MHANYS

Keep the Promise of Community Mental Health

At a time when our mental health service system is confronting unprecedented changes and challenges, our mental health community is expressing mounting concerns about the lack of services and funding to meet the growing need.

The carve in of the Medicaid mental health benefit into managed care necessitates that mental health providers develop a new level of sophistication in order to provide better care, participate equitably in value based payment agreements, deliver on the promise of reducing unnecessary and costly hospitalizations, and to bring their information systems into the 21st Century to improve their quality controls and reporting. As has been recognized for hospitals and other sectors of the health service system, this will require greater financial investment by the State in the mental health service system.

While there are significant investments in this year's budget for Penn Station Development, Javits Center Development, Third Rails on the LIRR, funding for upstate airports and to stabilize hospital systems, there are no commensurate long term investments in community mental health services. Even as new DSRIP and Medicaid managed care initiatives roll out, there is growing sentiment that much of the necessary funding will not be provided directly to our mental health agencies and instead will largely be filtered through much larger entities and in an uncertain timeframe.

Now is the time we need to invest more funding into New York's community mental health system. That is why this year, we are calling for a \$90 million investment in community mental health. Provider agencies should be given the flexibility to use these funds to better address staff compensation, infrastructure cuts and most importantly provide funding for quality services that keep people in the community and out of hospitals, correctional settings or homelessness.

We know there is a mental health crisis in this country. We also know it is not driven by violent incidents that sell papers, but by the everyday existence of New Yorkers

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with serious mental health conditions who are homeless, who are incarcerated, who live with aging family members who can no longer support them, who are wrongly institutionalized in nursing homes and adult homes and by our one in five children and adults who struggle in silence because they fear the stigma more than the hope of getting help.

Minimum Wage

In order to retain and attract a quality workforce, we support efforts to raise the minimum wage. But given that mental health agencies and other human service sectors rely on State and Federal funding, through Medicaid rates and grant programs to meet any additional labor costs driven by an increase in the minimum wage, a distinct and adequate funding pool must accompany any minimum wage increase agreement in this year's Budget. The Executive Budget as submitted did not identify how these labor costs would be paid for. We will work with the Governor's Office, the Legislature and our colleagues to ensure that an appropriate increase in labor costs does not financially harm the providers.

This investment is necessary. The time is now.

How will the \$90 Million be funded?

Together, our organizations have identified \$70 million in gross program funding that have unjustly been taken as savings in Reinvestment, the BHO HARP Investment Program and supportive housing instead of being kept in the service system. We will provide more details at tomorrow's mental hygiene budget hearing. These monies should instead make up the initial installment in our \$90 million investment request.

We Need Your Help to Get this Done

How can you help us? First, thing you can do is have your agency sign on for this campaign. Last year one of the keys to MHANYS' success in getting the mental health tax check off bill passed and signed was that they drew over one hundred agencies to sign on in support. Together, we know that we will be able to build on that number.

Throughout this process, we will develop advocacy opportunities and social media. Please come to the NYAPRS Legislative Day on February 23 and the MHANYS Legislative Day on March 9th and voice your support. You can register at www.mhanys.org and www.nyaprs.org.

Strong grassroots advocacy have brought about countless mental health advocacy victory in the past, and we will need your support more than ever to win this \$90 million investment in our community mental health service system.