



# POLICY PRIORITIES 2022

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**Funding for Nonprofit Behavioral Health Providers:** Funding for nonprofit human service providers in New York has been slashed by 26% since 2008, resulting in funding levels lower than in 1980. Nonprofits are expected to continually do more with less, but these providers cannot continue to provide quality services to communities without adequate funding. In 11 of the past 14 years, the statutory COLA was either not fully funded or funded at all, leaving over \$500 million lost to mental health and addiction services in New York. *MHANYS thanks Governor Hochul for proposing the addition of a full 5.4% COLA in this year's budget. We urge the Legislature to provide language that would fully fund a human services COLA tied to the CPI and to fund \$500 million for the mental health and addictions community in the State Budget to make up for funding lost from not funding of the statutory COLA.*

**Mental Health Resources for Schools:** Since 2018 MHANYS School Mental Health Resource and Training Center (SMHRTC) has worked to provide schools with resources necessary to implement provisions of the 2016 Mental Health Education Law. The SMHRTC has also responded to the mental health training needs of school personnel. *MHANYS seeks continued funding for the SMHRTC in the State Budget, and additional funding for the SMHRTC to respond to growing mental health training needs of school personnel. MHANYS also supports complimentary legislation (A.2136/Fernandez), which would require teachers, teaching assistants and educational leaders to receive three hours of training annually.*

**Mental Health and Higher Education:** The rising incidence of student mental health conditions on college campuses has been described as a growing crisis. The policies and practices of how colleges and universities deal with student mental health challenges is not always fair or helpful, and can at times add to the burden that students have to manage. *MHANYS is promoting public policies to increase mental health literacy on campuses and encourage whole health parity. In addition, MHANYS supports S.7659 (Kaplan), which includes these provisions for SUNY and CUNY schools. MHANYS seeks similar provisions in the law that would apply to independent and private colleges.*

**Mental Health Information and Resources in the Workplace:** While workplaces across New York make policies and best practices regarding physical health issues and accommodations clear, similar practices do not exist for mental health. Basic mental health information and resources are more important than ever as New Yorkers begin to return to their places of employment following months of coping with the COVID pandemic. *MHANYS supports S.7577 (Brouk)/A.8675 (Gunther), which would require mental health postings in the workplace; and promote voluntary guidelines in the workplace.*

**Mental Health Crisis Response:** 1,700 people die by suicide each year in New York. The number of suicides has risen 40% since 2000. New York needs a coordinated system for responding to crisis that includes a 9-8-8 crisis number supported by crisis stabilization centers and mobile crisis capability, which will result in more people getting help. *MHANYS supports Governor Hochul's proposed addition of funding in the budget for the first two years of 988 implementation. We also support long term funding for 988 through a surcharge to phones, similar to the funding already in place for 911.*

**Veteran's Mental Health:** Twenty percent of the vets who served in either Iraq or Afghanistan suffer from either major depression or post-traumatic stress disorder and 20% of vets with these disorders have experienced a traumatic brain injury. Unfortunately, veterans with mental health needs are often reluctant to get help for a variety of reasons including stigma, shame, embarrassment and fear of being perceived as weak. *MHANYS thanks Governor Hochul for her support in the budget for \$8 million dollars to supports the expansion of the very successful PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Program, which helps bridge the gap between veteran mental health needs and veteran reluctance to access mental health treatment. We urge the Legislature to add additional funding to insure that each county in New York has a Dwyer funded project for veterans.*