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Maintaining Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services and Supports

FEDERAL IMPACT TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE

Advocates for New York's adults, children, and families with mental health and substance use disorder related needs and the service providers who support them across our state, are deeply concerned about the [federal cuts](#) to Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP cuts are [expected to strip food assistance](#) from over 300,000 households and, nearly 1.5 million New Yorkers are expected to lose health coverage and more than 1 million will face restrictive rules and work requirements.

We see firsthand how critical continued access to health care and food support is for stability, recovery and community well-being. We are not only concerned about the individuals we serve, but also the behavioral health worker who relies on Medicaid for prescription drug coverage and the single parent working two jobs whose children depend on SNAP.

As tough decisions and any fiscal actions are being made, we urge you to prioritize and maintain access to substance use disorder and mental health services and supports.

These services are life-saving and instrumental to supporting the health, stability and well-being of our families and communities across New York. And because of years of chronic underfunding, for example, not receiving the full Cost-of-Living-Adjustments (COLA) over the years, the behavioral health sector is experiencing statewide average of 20%-30% vacancy rate, and a 35% annual turnover rate depending on provider type while facing increased operational costs. In addition, individuals and families continue to have ever-increasing demands for our services, mounting waitlists, and very limited access to care.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide a **2.7% targeted inflationary increase (TII)** based on July 2025 CPI-U to maintain mental health and substance use disorder services and supports.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AGENCY VACANCY AND TURNOVER RATES

According to a survey conducted by behavioral health agencies in August 2024 (*a sampling of 43% of the total workforce in community OMH and OASAS programs*), even with the influx of funding over the past few years, behavioral health agencies are challenged with workforce retention.

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INCREASED NEEDS FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

- In 2022 to 2023, close to **2.8 million New Yorkers, 12 years of age and older**, were diagnosed with a substance use disorder.
- NYC reports **700 overdose deaths in Q1 2023**.
- Investments are crucial for substance use and mental health services as **1 in 4 adults with serious mental health issues also have substance use problems**.
- In May 2024, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), published Youth Mental Health: The Numbers, which states, **"Adolescent mental health in the U.S. was worsening prior to the COVID-19 pandemic,"** but adding "Our nation's youth are experiencing a mental health crisis." The data finds increasing rates of depression with the percentage of high school students feeling sad and hopeless increasing significantly over a ten-year period reaching nearly 45% especially for females and LGBTQ youth.