

THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE CRISIS: THE MATH IS SIMPLE



5.4% CPI in COLA & \$500 Million Investment = Increased Access to Behavioral Health Services

THE PROBLEM

Our tireless, talented, dedicated and diverse workforce and the community agencies at which they work are no longer able to address the ever worsening public health crises connected with the opioid epidemic, increased rates of suicide in certain populations and the devastating impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Community behavioral health agencies have not received the statutorily promised Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) on an annual basis as the adjustment has only been appropriated three times in the past 15 years. It is imperative that the state budget include the COLA to meet the statutory obligation of the State.

The state's neglect of and failure to invest in the mental health and substance use disorder service delivery system has driven away our workforce due to unacceptably low wages and impossibly high caseloads.

Compounding the workforce shortages, organizations are suffocating under the weight of increased costs for energy, transportation, food, required technology advancements and the like.

These conditions combined with a ever rising demand for services has brought New York's safety net system beyond crisis proportions and requires immediate action by state government!

THE ANSWER

New York must address the longstanding underinvestment in the health and wellbeing of our communities by immediately addressing the following in the SFY 2022-23 Executive Budget:

- **Resuscitate the existing workforce** to address access and shortage issues by providing reimbursement rates that match costs of care.
- **Authorize the 5.4% Consumer Price Index-U (CPI-U) Adjustment** for Community Health Organizations in the statutory **Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)**.
- **Make the eFMAP workforce funding permanent** for the OMH & OASAS adult and children's workforce, programs and services and add funding for those services which did not qualify for funding.
- **Invest in ongoing recruitment initiatives** such as offering a pipeline, scholarships/loan forgiveness, career ladders, bonuses and other creative incentives that directly help workers.
- **Fund training initiatives** that promote diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and social determinants of health for our workforce.

INCREASED NEED AND DEMAND VS. SUPPLY

PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGES



OPIOID CRISIS

37.8%
INCREASE

New York City predicts a **37.8% increase in the 12-month for drug overdose deaths**

SUICIDE

Suicide rate of Black males ages 15-24 **rose by 47% between 2013-2019**

47%

Suicide rate of Black females ages 15-24 **rose by 59% between 2013-2019**

59%

This number **decreased** in white youth during this time.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

According to one CDC report from June 2020,

31%
respondents reported
symptoms of anxiety or depression

13%
respondents reported
having started or increased substance use

26%
respondents reported
stress-related symptoms

11%
respondents reported
having serious thoughts of suicide in the past 30 days

WORKFORCE SUPPLY

Mental health and substance use treatment organizations

78%

reported a 78% increased demand for services

97%

97% of organizations reported it has been difficult to recruit staff

ACCESSING SERVICES

MORE THAN 1 IN 5 NEW YORKERS

reported they were unable to access specialized mental health treatment due to increased waitlists