



### **Statement on the COLA in the SFY 2024 NYS Enacted Budget**

Advocates for New York's adults, children, and families with mental health and addiction related needs, and the service providers who support them across our state, agree that the 4% Cost-of-living Adjustment (COLA) enacted in the 2024 NYS Budget is not sufficient to meet the needs of increased costs facing community-based agencies, and their current ability to recruit and retain staff.

Given the outcome of the SFY 24 budget deliberations, New Yorkers should be very concerned that waiting lists for treatment through the public mental hygiene system will continue to grow, children will continue to stay in Emergency Rooms for months awaiting appropriate aftercare services, and our staff will continue to seek out better paying jobs that recognize their skills and abilities and allow them to feed their families and pay their bills.

Since 2007, the Consumer Price Index has risen 43.8%. The Human Services COLA has increased by 10.6% resulting in a COLA deficit over the past 16 years of 33.2%. Therefore, a 4% COLA this year is effectively a reduction in funding, given current inflationary costs.

We acknowledge the investments and new initiatives put forth by Governor Hochul and supported by the NYS Senate and Assembly which are necessary to meet the increased demands and needs in mental health however a similar investment is needed in the OASAS system of care. Nevertheless, these significant dollars spent in building new services will prove to be futile without adequate support for the current workforce.

Throughout budget negotiations, the entire Human Services sector advocated for an 8.5% COLA. Our request was based on real needs that will not dissipate with this budget deal. Going forward, we will work tirelessly to secure the resources required to ensure every New Yorker can access high quality care through the state's public mental hygiene system. New Yorkers deserve nothing less.

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## **About Behavioral Health Advocates**

Behavioral Health Advocates is comprised of twelve statewide organizations that have come together representing adult and children service providers, families, peers and other stakeholders to achieve common goals within the behavioral health sector.

The 12 organizations that comprise this group of advocates are:

- Association for Community Living, Sebrina Barrett, [sebrina@aclnys.org](mailto:sebrina@aclnys.org)
- Coalition of Medication-Assisted Treatment Providers and Advocates of New York State
- Families Together in New York State, Paige Pierce, [ppierce@ftnys.org](mailto:ppierce@ftnys.org)
- Mental Health Association in New York State, Glenn Liebman, [gliebman@mhanys.org](mailto:gliebman@mhanys.org)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness New York State (NAMI-NYS), Sharon Horton, [sharon@naminys.org](mailto:sharon@naminys.org)
- New York Association of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers, Inc. (ASAP), John Coppola, [jcoppola@asapnys.org](mailto:jcoppola@asapnys.org)
- New York State Care Management Coalition, Jackie Negri, [jackienegrillc@gmail.com](mailto:jackienegrillc@gmail.com)
- New York State Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health, Maria Cristalli, [info@cdbhny.org](mailto:info@cdbhny.org)
- New York State Council for Community Behavioral Health Care, Lauri Cole, [lauri@nyscouncil.org](mailto:lauri@nyscouncil.org)
- New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Harvey Rosenthal, [harveyr@nyaprs.org](mailto:harveyr@nyaprs.org)
- The Coalition for Behavioral Health, Amy Dorin, [adorin@coalitionny.org](mailto:adorin@coalitionny.org)
- The Supportive Housing Network of New York, Pascale Leone, [pleone@shnny.org](mailto:pleone@shnny.org)