



NYS Coalition
for Children's Behavioral Health



The Alliance
for Rights
and Recovery
Formerly NYAPRS



MHANYS
Mental Health Association
in New York State



Council for Community
Behavioral Healthcare



NEW YORK STATE
CARE MANAGEMENT
COALITION
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Statement on Governor Hochul's SFY 25 Executive Budget Proposal from Behavioral Health Advocates

Advocates for New Yorkers with mental health and addiction related challenges, and the community-based organizations that support them are grateful that mental health is front and center in Governor Hochul's SFY 25 Executive Budget proposal. Many of the proposed initiatives in the Executive proposals are reflective of the immediate needs of adults, children and families seeking access to mental health and substance use disorder services after decades of an underfunded system.

We concur with the Governor that "mental health is the defining challenge of our time" and recognize the Governor's commitment to the sector through unprecedented new proposals and the 1.5% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA). However, this amount is much less than what is needed, which is the full 3.2% tied to the July 2023 CPI-U. This proposal does not adequately deliver the resources the behavioral health sector needs to address the severe workforce crisis and the increasing costs associated with the daily operations of services. The 3.2% COLA and further investments are needed for our workforce and operations.

New Yorkers continue to have long waiting periods to access mental health and substance use disorder services and support. Children and families seeking services often remain in emergency rooms for unacceptable periods of time, from weeks to months. And, according to a recent survey (July 2023) of mental health and substance use disorder agencies, **job vacancies are at 21%.**

The Governor's address did not provide adequate attention to addiction and drug overdose. New York's rising overdose deaths are startling. According to OASAS, [from 2018 to 2022 there was a 73% increase for all statewide overdoses \(3,697 to 6,393\), and a 127% increase in fentanyl related overdoses. In NYC, DOHMH reported 700 overdose deaths in the first quarter of 2023.](#) The reasons and more necessitate continued investments and innovations in the current system of care.

The Governor's bold vision for new and enhanced initiatives will only be possible with further investments in our current workforce, operations, and services. Such investments are needed for **both** mental health and addiction services which are equally important components of our overall health as [more than one in four adults living with serious mental health problems also have a substance use problem.](#)

We urge the Governor and Legislature to work collaboratively to improve on the proposed 1.5% COLA, and to include \$500 million in additional resources to address the current and ongoing needs of the entire behavioral health system. Only then can we collectively provide the level of services and support at a time when they have never been more needed.

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