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We write today on behalf of thousands of mental health and substance use/addiction community-based agencies across New York and the individuals they serve to express our serious concerns over New York's delayed response to the Change Healthcare cyberattack and specifically, the lack of direction provided to mental health and addiction providers. Our providers will be crippled by ongoing revenue cycle challenges without immediate financial and regulatory support from New York State.

We are concerned that the state agencies and regulators that oversee the provision of these services did not immediately issue guidance regarding the steps the State will be taking, offering assistance to agencies that have been impacted by this unprecedented situation. While the Change Healthcare clearinghouse outage occurred on February 24, community-based mental health and addiction providers did not hear from state representatives for a full week. When providers were contacted by state representatives, the delayed response amounted to a simple survey and no guidance on how the state would ensure continuity of care for the individuals they serve.

Given the gravity of this situation, we are writing today to request clear guidance from New York State that includes detailed information on the steps that regulators are taking to support community-based mental health and addiction providers. This guidance must include temporary solutions providers can take advantage of to address the ongoing revenue cycle crisis being experienced by community-based mental health and addiction providers, most of which do not have adequate reserves to sustain their services beyond mid-March. And the temporary 'loan fund' that UnitedHealth established falls short of addressing the growing fiscal challenges impacting providers across the state and country. Providers are having little success getting through to OPTUM Pay Financial Services to gauge their eligibility for these loans, let alone to access temporary funding.

The Change Healthcare clearinghouse outage has brought entire systems of care to their knees, and it continues to jeopardize access to care for tens of thousands of New Yorkers, many of whom are already sitting on waiting lists and unable to access the lifesaving care they need. As the Change Healthcare outage drags on, we can anticipate an exacerbation of these already significant waiting lists. Local communities across New York continue to experience unimaginable grief and loss associated with the overdose epidemic that is ravaging our communities. New York can ill afford to delay care for even one more New Yorker. And so, as this crisis drags on, we implore state leaders to quickly establish an 'emergency fund' that is easy to access and that will provide a financial bridge for providers that are approaching a tipping point where they will not be able to make payroll.

New York makes it a requirement for insurers seeking a license to sell insurance products in our state to have very significant reserves and yet, from what we can see there has been no requirement by regulators that health plans pay their in-network providers prospectively, based on prior claims reimbursement history. Furthermore, it does not appear that the Department of Financial Services is going to require insurers to take responsibility for their failure to create redundancies in claims processing systems in the event of another clearinghouse breakdown like the current situation.

New York State relies on the community-based safety net system of mental health and addiction providers to find ways to expand access to care with very limited resources. Our organizations have repeatedly warned state officials that we have hit a tipping point in which we are unable to meet current demand for care let alone to

expand our services to meet future needs. Now, we face a new level of crisis in which we may lose the staff we have (to this point) been able to retain. We simply cannot afford to miss payroll or to reduce services due to the state's failure to help us sustain our programs and services.

We respectfully implore you to provide immediate assistance.

Sincerely,

Harvey Rosenthal, The Alliance for Rights and Recovery (formerly NYAPRS)
Sebrina Barrett, Executive Director, Association for Community Living
Allegra Schorr, President, Coalition of Medication-Assisted Treatment Providers and Advocates of New York State (COMPACT)
Paige Pierce, Chief Executive Officer, Families Together in NYS
John Coppola and Amy Dorin, Co-Chief Operating Officers, InUnity Alliance
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Lauri Cole, Executive Director, New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
Pascale Leone, Executive Director, The Supporting Housing Network of New York

Behavioral Health Advocates is comprised of 11 statewide organizations that have come together as an ad hoc group representing adult and children service providers, families, peers, and other stakeholders to achieve common goals within the behavioral health sector.