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### **Executive and Legislative Branches Agree It's Time to Address Barriers to Mental Health and Addictions Care**

Over ten years ago New York State regulators found it necessary to set a mandated minimum reimbursement rate that must be paid for community-based mental health and substance use disorder services under Medicaid. However, this did not apply to services provided to New Yorkers with commercial insurance benefits. This has led to a serious inequity for New Yorkers with commercial insurance who are often unable to find a provider due to insurance rates that are (on average) just 50% of those paid by the Medicaid Program for the same services.

Governor Hochul included a ground-breaking proposal in her executive budget that seeks to level the access to care playing field regardless of the insurance card in the pocket of the individual seeking services. The Governor included a requirement for commercial insurers to pay community-based mental health and substance use disorder agencies (at least) the same reimbursement rate as that which is paid to providers for services to Medicaid members.

We are grateful to the Governor for her leadership on this important issue and we are so gratified to see that both the Assembly and the Senate have heard our concerns and included a similar proposal in each of their one-house budget bills to ensure equitable access to essential mental health and addiction care for New Yorkers with commercial insurance.

The New York State Council has been advocating for this reform for close to a decade. We want to express our thanks to each and every New Yorker who helped us call attention to this serious problem and advocated with us for this important reform.

*The New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare (The NYS Council) represents 150 community-based mental health and addiction prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction organizations across New York. Check us out at: [www.nyscouncil.org](http://www.nyscouncil.org)*