



The Honorable Kathleen Hochul
Governor
State of New York
New York State Capitol Bldg.
Albany, NY 12224

March 27, 2025

Dear Governor Hochul:

I am writing today on behalf of 165 community-based substance use disorder and mental health agencies across New York – organizations that provide essential and often life-saving services to New Yorkers seeking prevention, treatment, recovery and harm reduction services and supports through New York’s public mental hygiene system.

Thank you for your recent press release acknowledging the termination of critical funding from SAMHSA to New York State – commitments that up until now have permitted our agencies to face down a persistent overdose epidemic that has ravaged far too many communities, a youth mental health crisis that continues to bear down on New York’s families and children, and stagnant reimbursement rates that have forced many of our member agencies to reduce access to care despite increased demand for services.

Given the recent abrupt termination of several federal block grants programs, the NYS Council respectfully requests that you establish a Contingency Fund in the OASAS and OMH agency budgets, and for these Funds to be included in the final enacted state budget. Contingency Funds will permit state agency leaders to mitigate the immediate impacts of the termination of COVID-era funding streams that have been so essential to so many New Yorkers, and they will allow impacted community-based providers to ensure continuity of care while they make alternate plans (with financial

assistance where necessary) while we fight for the needs of the New Yorkers we serve in the halls of Congress.

The NYS Council has always demonstrated pragmatism when we seek assistance from state leaders. We are well aware of the emergency facing the healthcare system at this time. However, we are deeply concerned that the substantial gains that have been made to this point in reducing overdose rates in some communities across New York, and the progress we have made in addressing the youth mental health crisis, will be reversed by this abrupt and unwarranted termination of funds. We stand behind you as you face this crisis head on; however, we need your immediate assistance.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Respectfully,

Lauri Cole, Executive Director

New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

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