



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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STATEMENT FROM LAURI COLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NYS COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE ON GOVERNOR HOCHUL'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS:

“In today’s State of the State address, Governor Hochul said that ‘Your family is my fight,’ but for the millions of New Yorkers with mental health and/or substance use disorder conditions enrolled in New York’s Medicaid managed care program, there’s still work to be done. While the Governor did mention the importance of mental health, she proposed little that will help New Yorkers with this insurance to get the services and supports they need. We need the Governor and the state legislature to take bold and decisive steps to transform New York’s behavioral health care delivery system. Specifically, **we need our leaders to carve behavioral health outpatient, residential, and rehabilitation services out of Medicaid managed care.** Doing this will cut waitlists, reduce and remove red tape, improve access to care, enhance program quality, and **save the state of New York more than \$400 million annually** by taking largely for-profit managed care plans out of the equation.

A carve-out is the best option to achieve these goals. Behavioral health access will not be improved by competitive procurement of insurers as proposed in prior Executive Budgets, or any other proposal that does not remove the middlemen. Procurement would be a time-consuming undertaking that will not solve the significant waitlists, delays, and denials of coverage that people with behavioral health disorders are currently experiencing. It would be expensive, ineffective, and profoundly distracting. The crisis is urgent. People are dying. New Yorkers deserve a solution now. Governor Hochul did not create this problem, but she can resolve it.

We strongly agree with the Governor's statement that ‘coverage means little without access.’ To ensure access, **we urge the Governor to include a behavioral health outpatient, residential, and rehabilitation carve-out in the Executive Budget** because it is the only way to get New Yorkers the mental health and substance use disorder services and support, they need, while also saving New Yorkers money and releasing providers from the quagmire of red tape and delays they currently experience. Let’s spend state money taking care of people, providing good jobs, and helping New Yorkers live lives of dignity and productivity, not lining managed care organizations’ pockets.”

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