



ACTION ALERT

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A non-profit tax-exempt organization representing New York City's community-based mental health sector.

COLA - DEPENDS ON YOU!

The next two weeks are critical if we hope to secure a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in the budget. The budget process is on a fast track. The Assembly plans to wrap up its version by March 6. Therefore, we must mobilize a swift and targeted campaign that requires effort from everyone - you, your staff, board members, clients and friends. *It is imperative that these initial steps be taken to give us a fighting chance:*

- Immediately schedule visits in the district offices of your State Assembly and Senate representatives. There is no substitute for "face time" with elected officials and their staff. This conveys seriousness, urgency and the real human impact of our issue. Multiple visits are encouraged. If you do not know who represents you in Albany at all program sites, call the Coalition at (212) 586-4555 or e-mail: jmurray@cvmha.org and we will give names and phone numbers so you may initiate contact.
- Outreach to Senate Republicans is essential. For those represented in the Senate by Roy Goodman, R- Manhattan; Guy Vellella, R-Bronx; Serphin Maltese R- Queens; Frank Padavan R- Queens or John Marchi, R- Staten Island, please make a strong effort to meet with them in the district. *City representatives in the Senate majority must be made aware of the importance of this issue.*

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Please FAX this form back to the Coalition (212) 541-6183 so we can track the collective efforts.

AGENCY NAME:

	Representative	Persons Present	Comments
ASSEMBLY			
SENATE			

EXAMPLE:

SENATE	PADAVAN	John Jones and Fred Floggs from our agency. Padavan staff member Jenny Smith	Meeting on 2/20. COLA. Made points about losing staff. Ms. Smith asked questions about agency expenses. She said Padavan is undecided, but will convey purpose of our visit to him
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COLA TALKING POINTS

- The last COLA was in 1994-95 and lasted for only one quarter before being rescinded. Effectively, cost of living in the voluntary sector has been flat since 1986.
- Turnover rates at community mental health providers have risen upwards of 27% in some cases.
- Competition for staff now includes entry level positions at food service establishments. Staff morale is low. Inexperienced staff and lack of continuity hurts clients.
- Employees performing identical services at State operational facilities have enjoyed inflation pacing increases. Salaries average \$10,000 more per year in the State system.
- Existence of Voluntary Agencies providing quality care is in jeopardy.