



ACTION ALERT

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

Please distribute this to your ENTIRE staff and Board

In the wake of the Governor's vetoes of nearly everything that the legislature added into the FY 1998-99 New York State budget it is imperative that we have a concerted, concentrated, constructive response. The Coalition's Government Relations Committee has suggested a multi-phase response involving the press, the legislature and the Governor. The first phase is outlined below. It is imperative that this be done, because without it the battle will definitely be lost.

ACTION TO TAKE

Write/Fax/Phone the Governor and his key staff members: *(over and over again!)*

Hon. George E. Pataki
New York State Governor
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224
(518) 474-8390 (phone)
(518) 474-1513 (fax)

Bradford Race
Secretary to the Governor
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224
(518) 474-4246 (phone)
(518) 474-1513 (fax)

Robert King
Director NYS Division of the Budget
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224
(518) 474-2300 (phone)
(518) 474-1969 (fax)

Jim Natoli
Director of State Operations for the Governor
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224
(518) 474-3522 (phone)
(518) 486-9684 (fax)

POINTS TO MAKE

- ◆ **COLA/Trended Increase was a modest request that has a huge impact on service delivery and on the lives of working people.**
 - ◆ Many workers have had no COLA for over a decade.
 - ◆ Failure to provide a COLA results in large, unfair salary discrepancies.
 - ◆ A COLA impacts *every* region of the State.
- ◆ **Transitional Funding will allow the community-based system to compete fairly in a market-driven economy.**
 - ◆ Managed care reduces income for community-based providers.
 - ◆ Managed care increases costs for community-based providers.
 - ◆ This is a one-time ask, not something that will affect future budgets.

A sample letter is attached.

**If you have questions or need help with the letters please contact Joshua Rubin at
(212) 586-4555 or jfrubin@cvmha.org**

Dear Governor Pataki:

I am writing to you to express my sadness, dismay and anger over some of the programs that you decided to remove from this year's State budget. Many of the things that you cut were necessary programs and not political excessive and unnecessary spending. I would like to highlight two of these.

Many human services workers in New York have not received a **Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)** since Ronald Reagan was President. These people spend their working lives caring for New York's neediest citizens. They take care of the millions in this State who are unable to take care of themselves. They provide dignity and self-respect, not to mention compassion and care, to New Yorkers who suffer from mental illness, mental retardation, developmental disabilities, substance addictions, homelessness and poverty. They care for our abused children and our forgotten elderly, our uninsured and our working people. They are on the front lines everyday in our wars on drugs, poverty, homelessness and illness. They are not trying to get rich, they merely want a living wage to provide for their own families.

There was a time, not too long ago, when a COLA was not something you had to ask for. It was right that salaries for people providing such valuable services should increase with inflation, so they did. Then times in New York State got tough. During the lean years these dedicated social servants tightened their belts, bit the proverbial bullet and did without. Now that good times are here again and budget surpluses are counted by billions, they should not be asked to continue to do without.

The legislature this year also realized that community-based health care providers will require some help to adapt to a Medicaid-managed care environment, aid that will help them to become more competitive in a market-driven care delivery system. They included in their budget some **transitional funding** to enable community-based health care providers during this difficult time in their history. Managed care is driving expenses up and revenues down. Without funding to help make the conversion, services will be badly disrupted, if not eliminated entirely and hundreds of millions of dollars of public investment in community-based organizations will be lost rather than re-tooled or re-engineered.

Please consider the effects that vetoing these items has on New Yorkers in need. These items add up to a very small percentage of your overall vetoes, yet they have a tremendous impact on the lives and communities of New Yorkers. Consider rescinding these vetoes as you did with the breast cancer funding. I look forward to receiving your response. Thank you.

Sincerely,