



ACTION ALERT

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

March 12, 1999

Important Legislation Passes Mental Health Committee

Three bills have passed the Assembly Mental Health Committee and have been referred to the Ways and Means Committee. All three bills would do something that we have been advocating for quite some time, so it is important that we support their passage. If you would like a copy of the bills, contact Joshua Rubin at (212) 586-4555x17 or jfrubin@cvmha.org.

- A 6781: Would **increase** the number of mental health **special needs plans** authorized to be established from six to **seven**. The seventh SNP would in all likelihood go to New York City.
- A5768: Would **provide a rate adjustment** for the **non-contract agencies** that do not receive COPS supplements and were left out of last year's COLA.
- A5949: Would **require the State to Reinvest** in community mental health the **monies** earned **from selling** the **property** of State psychiatric hospitals.

Action requested:

Contact New York City members of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee (listed below) to express your support for these pieces of legislation. Also, contact key Senators to encourage their support when/if the legislation makes it to the Senate.

Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr.
Chair, Ways and Means
NY State Assembly
656 W. 181st Street
New York, NY 10033
(212) 312-1441
Fax: (212) 312-1445

Hon. Alexander B. Grannis
Member
NY State Assembly
1672 First Avenue
New York, NY 10128
(212) 860-4906
Fax: (212) 996-3046

Hon. Edward Griffith
Member
NY State Assembly
270 Broadway, Rm. 720
New York, NY 10007
(212) 312-1434
Fax: (212) 312-1436

Hon. Joseph R. Lentol
Member
NY State Assembly
619 Lorimer Street
Brooklyn, NY 11211
(718) 383-7474
Fax: (718) 383-1576

Hon. Albert Vann
Member, NY State Assembly
613-619 Throop Avenue
1st Floor, SW.
Brooklyn, NY 11216
(718) 919-0740
Fax: (718) 919-0744

Hon. Ivan C. Lafayette
Member
NY State Assembly
33-46 92nd Street, Suite 1W
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
(718) 457-0384
Fax: (718) 335-8254

Hon. Clarence Norman, Jr.
Member
NY State Assembly
1218 Union Street
Brooklyn, NY 11225
(718) 756-1776
Fax: (718) 778-3010

Hon. Helene E. Weinstein
Member
NY State Assembly
3520 Nostrand Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11229
(718) 648-4700
Fax: (718) 769-4846

Hon. Elizabeth A. Connelly
Member
NY State Assembly
1150 Forest Hills Rd.
Staten Island, NY 10314
(718) 494-3200
Fax: (718) 983-5620

Hon. Deborah J. Glick
Member
NY State Assembly
853 Broadway, Suite 2120
New York, NY 10003
(212) 674-5153
Fax: (212) 674-5530

Hon. Roberto Ramirez
Member
NY State Assembly
2488 Grand Concourse
#416
Bronx, NY 10458
(718) 933-2204
Fax: (718) 933-2535

Hon. Gloria Davis
Member
NY State Assembly
540 E. 169th Street
Bronx, NY 10456
(718) 588-3119
Fax: (718) 588-3317

Hon. Catherine T. Nolan
Member
NY State Assembly
879 Woodward Avenue
Ridgewood, NY 11385
(718) 456-9492
Fax: (718) 417-4982

Hon. Brian M. McLaughlin
Member
NY State Assembly
163-13 Depot Road
Flushing, NY 11358
(718) 762-6575
Fax: (718) 762-0917

Hon. Robert A. Straniere
Member
NY State Assembly
182 Rose Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10306
(718) 667-0314
Fax: (718) 987-4593

Hon. Joseph L. Bruno
Majority Leader
New York State Senate
909 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247
(518) 455-3191
Fax: (518) 455-2448

Hon. Thomas W. Libous
Chair, Mental Health
Committee
New York State Senate
512 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247
(518) 455-2677
Fax: (518) 455-2065

A sample letter is attached

Dear _____ :

I am writing you today to encourage you to support three pieces of legislation that would help ensure the stability of the community-based mental health sector. Assembly bills 6781, 5949 and 5768 are all currently pending before the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, and should be passed as soon as possible.

A6781 would change the legislation that authorized the creation of mental health special needs plans (SNPs) to allow a seventh plan in New York State. As you know, the theory behind the creation of special needs plans is that the competition of the market place will make the provision of mental health services more efficient and cost-effective. Unfortunately, the legislation that authorized the creation of the plans did not anticipate how many different regions of the State would want them. Because of the extremely high demand, there are currently only two SNPs available for New York City, not enough to ensure adequate competition and the broadest possible participation of community-based providers. A6781 would add a third SNP for the City. I urge you to support it.

A5768 would adjust the rates of licensed non-contract community-based mental health clinics to keep pace with inflation. The last time any of these clinics received a rate adjustment was in 1990, and some have not had an adjustment to their reimbursement rate since 1985. Furthermore, these clinics were excluded by design from the 2.5% cost of living adjustment allocated to community-based providers in 1998. This important piece of the mental health safety net needs help. A5768 would provide that help. I urge you to support it.

A5949 would establish a community mental hygiene services fund. As the State closes the large obsolete State psychiatric hospitals, it makes sense that the money earned from those sales should be reinvested into community-based services. The State is able to close down these very expensive hospitals because advances in psychiatry and psychotropic drugs have enabled people with mental illness to return to the community. The community-based mental health system provides the supports they need in order to survive and prosper, but we need the support of the State government to meet the needs of our clients. A5949 would help to address the continuing problem of an underfunded community-based mental health system. I urge you to support it.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. I am confident that with your assistance the community-based mental health sector can continue to help New York's most vulnerable citizens into the 21st century.

Sincerely,