



ACTION ALERT

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

March 25, 1999

Costs Increase - So Should Rates

The Assembly included a 2% rate increase for community-based providers in its one-house budget resolution. The Senate's resolution did not address the rate increase needs of voluntary agencies at all. As they go to conference committees in the near future, it is essential that they realize how important this issue is to the quality care we provide to people with mental illnesses.

What we want:

An **UNRESTRICTED** trended rate adjustment to at least keep pace with inflation for **THE ENTIRE MENTAL HEALTH SECTOR** on personnel services **AND OTHER THAN PERSONNEL SERVICES** costs.

Action Requested:

Have your **entire staff** call/fax/write/email/visit the key politicians listed below (most of them are the members of the Mental Health conference committee from the Senate) as well as your own representatives (especially your State Senator). It is crucial that we keep the pressure on.

If you need help identifying your representatives, please contact Joshua Rubin at (212) 586-4555x17 or jfrubin@cvmha.org.

A sample letter is attached.

Hon. George E. Pataki
Governor
State of New York
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224
(212) 681-4580
Fax: (212) 681-4643
gov.pataki@chamber.state.ny.us

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

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

Hon. Patricia McGee
Chair, Cmte. on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
New York State Senate
814 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247
(518) 455-3563
Fax: (518) 426-6905
mcgee@senate.state.ny.us

Hon. Sheldon Silver
Speaker
NY State Assembly
Legislative Office Building # 932
Albany, NY 11248
(518) 455-3791
Fax: (518) 455-5459
speaker@assembly.state.ny.us

Hon. William J. Larkin, Jr.
Member
New York State Senate
947 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247
(518) 455-2770
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larkin@senate.state.ny.us

Hon. Frank Padavan
Member
New York State Senate
505 State Capitol
Albany, NY 12247
(518) 455-3381
Fax: (518) 455-2008
padavan@senate.state.ny.us

Hon. Guy J. Velella
Member
New York State Senate
915 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247
(518) 455-3264
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velella@senate.state.ny.us

Dear _____ :

I am writing to you today to express my concern that the community-based behavioral healthcare system, alone among the health disciplines, does not have a trended rate increase to keep pace with inflation and keep up with competitive State and private sector salaries. Last year, thanks in part to your efforts, a 2.5% cost of living adjustment was passed for some of the employees of some voluntary agencies. This welcome relief was very long overdue and I am grateful for it.

Unfortunately, the COLA allocated last year was insufficient to make up for nearly a decade without an inflation pacing adjustment. Furthermore, many staff members were excluded from an allocation that went only to the lowest paid workers, and many agencies were omitted entirely from the allocation.

For these reasons I am hoping that you can help the community-based behavioral healthcare sector get an unrestricted trended increase that is accessible to the entire field. The inability to keep pace with inflation in salaries is incredibly important, but the costs of rent, supplies, insurance and other items also increases with inflation.

Please do whatever you can to ensure that this injustice is not allowed to continue. Community-based behavioral health providers need a trended increase now.

Sincerely,