



# ACTION ALERT

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

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On January 14<sup>th</sup> Tipper Gore announced President Clinton's proposal for a \$70 million increase in the Mental Health Block Grant. This represents a 24% increase over the FY1999 budget - the largest increase in the history of the block grant. Mrs. Gore indicated that the money would be targeted for the following types of consumers:

- Adults with severe and persistent mental illness, particularly
  - those with co-occurring psychiatric and addictive disorders
  - those with forensic histories
  - those who are homeless
- Children with serious emotional disturbances, particularly
  - those with co-occurring psychiatric and addictive disorders
  - those at risk of out-of-home placement
  - those involved with the law enforcement system
  - those who are runaways or homeless

Additionally Mrs. Gore specified types of services that would be targeted including:

- For adults:
  - ACT teams
  - Psychiatric rehabilitation
  - Integrated treatment for co-occurring disorders in collaboration with criminal justice agencies
  - Programs to aid in the transition from forensic facilities to community-based providers
- For children:
  - Day treatment programs (school-based and freestanding)
  - School-based services not covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
  - Integrated treatment for co-occurring disorders in collaboration with juvenile justice agencies
  - Intensive in-home services
  - Family respite care services
  - Other wrap-around services designed to keep children with severe emotional disturbances in the home

## **Action needed:**

Write to New York State members on the House Committee on Appropriations. Urge them to support the proposed increase in the block grant. Majority members from New York are **James Walsh** and **Michael Forbes**. Minority members on the Appropriations Committee are **Nita Lowey** and **Jose Serrano**.

A sample letter is attached.

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_,  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_,

I write to you today to encourage you to support the President's proposal for a \$70 million increase to the Mental Health Block Grant. The mental healthcare safety net in America needs shoring up and the proposed increase in the block grant would be an excellent step in the right direction.

The administration's proposal, as outlined by Tipper Gore at Dartmouth University on January 14 targets money to the consumers who need it most. The administration clearly recognizes that specific groups of seriously and persistently mentally ill people need more comprehensive services and are not receiving them. People with co-occurring addictive disorders, forensic histories and no homes are in exceptional risk and need enhanced services. The proposed increase in the block grant would help to provide those services.

I further applaud the administration's recognition of the needs of seriously emotionally disturbed children. Especially encouraging is the attempt to support programs that keep emotionally disturbed children in the home. Community-based care is more humane, more effective and more inexpensive, for children or adults.

I urge you to do everything in your power to ensure complete funding of the administration's proposal for a \$70 million increase in the Mental Health Block Grant. Thank you.

Sincerely,