



ACTION ALERT

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

April 26, 1999

Time to say thanks

As the money begins to flow from last year's COLA, and the campaign for this year's heats up, it is important that we thank those who helped us get this money. We recognize that the COLA was neither substantial nor comprehensive nor easily implemented, but it was an increase to the base, and for that we should be thankful.

The legislators who enabled last year's COLA are the same who we are asking to enable this year's. Unless they feel that their contribution is recognized and appreciated, they are unlikely to use the limited funds available for a trended increase for community based providers.

Action requested:

Agency executives should send a thank you note to key elected officials (listed below) and express our gratitude for the \$18 million allocated for a COLA in the 1998 legislative session.

Hon. George E. Pataki
Governor
State of New York
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Joseph L. Bruno
Majority Leader
New York State Senate
909 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Sheldon Silver
Speaker
NY State Assembly
932 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 11248

Hon. Thomas W. Libous
Chair, Mental Health
Committee
New York State Senate
512 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. James F. Brennan
Chair of Mental Health
Committee
NY State Assembly
826 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248

A sample letter is attached

Dear _____ :

I wanted to thank you for all of your help in securing a 2.5% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for many staff of community-based providers. The increase, while modest represents to me a recognition by the government of New York State that the work my staff does is valuable.

Let me assure you that the difference is noticed. The additional income will help me [add details about the help to your agency in terms of staff retention and morale that the COLA will provide].

I would also like to take this opportunity to stress that the problem has not been solved. As grateful as I am that you were able to help get a COLA for staff salaries last year, our other costs do not stop increasing. While salary needs are great, we also face inflationary increases in OTPS areas. The costs of rent, supplies, postage, MIS systems all increase with inflation and unless the State provides increases to cover these costs, the quality of care suffers.

Please do whatever you can to ensure that all community-based agencies get a trended rate increase this year.

Thank you again for last year's 2.5% COLA and thank you in advance for helping us address this problem going forward.

Sincerely,