

Coalition Briefs

February 6, 1998

The
Coalition
of Voluntary
Mental Health
Agencies, Inc.



A SEMI-MONTHLY UPDATE ON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN NEW YORK

System Stabilization and Transition are Key Issues for 1998 State Budget

The Coalition and The NY State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare join forces this year to advocate for enhanced funding of community mental health services. Our concentrated efforts will be on system stabilization and transition to managed care. Mental health agencies have received neither a cost-of-living increase nor a Medicaid rate increase in many years.

While inflation has eaten away at providers' ability to maintain needed levels of service and uphold staff morale, more is required of community-based agencies as the transition to managed care begins. Employees in the State operated mental health system have enjoyed inflation pacing increases while voluntary agencies have had to do more with less, resulting in vast salary differentials in the public and voluntary sectors.

These disparities not only make it difficult to deliver services in an increasingly competitive environment but make it nearly impossible to come up with adequate resources for managed care readiness, a necessity for upholding the safety net for poor and uninsured New Yorkers. □

Reinvestment Works--Extend It

The Coalition and The Council are pushing for a multi-year extender of Reinvestment. The uncertain economic outlook for the future is likely to force more State hospital closing and bed take-downs as debt service and out of scale operational costs grow more burdensome. These mental health dollars belong in the community where people with mental illness receive supports and services that help them live mainstreamed lives. We will also be seeking more Home And Community Based Waivers for managed-care-like services to children a State commitment to a NYNY2 program and a mental health benefit in Child Health Plus. □

NYNY2 Needs Help

On January 29th, the Mayor presented his preliminary budget for 1999 and financial plan for 1998-2002. The Department of Homeless Services capital budget provides \$85 million funding for 1000 units, of which 600 are targeted for NYNY2. The funding is a federal and city combination (\$70 million federal, \$15 million city). Of course, for any units to become functional the State must provide an operating subsidy. Albany must step up to the funding plate if there is to be any NYNY2 housing. □

Movin' On Up

Congratulations to Marlene Zurack, who has been promoted to Deputy Director of Health and Human Services at the New York City Office of Management and Budget. She replaces Lisa Parrish who recently became Chief of Staff for Deputy Mayor Randy Mastro. Congratulations and best wishes to Mark Hurwitz, currently Director of the Mental Health Project of the Urban Justice Center. Next month, Mark will join the Department of Homeless Services as an Assistant Commissioner in charge of Adult Shelters. □

Save the Date

The Coalition's 1998 Mental Health Awards Ceremony will take place on Thursday June 4, 1998 at 6:00 p.m. Mark your calendar now!

Upcoming Dates

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| February 9 | Managed Care Technical Assistance for Clubhouses |
| February 10 | Coalition Lobbying Day |
| February 12 | Finance Committee Board of Directors
Managed Care Self Evaluation Tool Training Session at ICD |
| February 17 | Children's Mental Health Alliance |
| February 18 | Blue Cross Presentation |
| February 20 | Children's Mental Health Action Network |
| February 24 | Managed Care Technical Assistance Program at NYANA
Children's Mental Health Alliance |
| February 26 | Membership meeting |