



# Coalition Briefs

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

## Union is pulling out stops against *Reinvestment II*

While the Coalition and other mental health advocates statewide are committed to the Governor's proposed increases for community-based mental health, the unions are working overtime to defeat it. This includes the latest media blitz: a full-page ad in the Legislative Gazette. "The road to recovery just got longer," the ad reads, and claims this "would add a detour to quality care."

"Not only is this a distortion of the proposal's impact," says Phillip A. Saperia, Executive Director of The Coalition, "it's factually untrue; the road to community-based treatment options is a short walk around the corner." Saperia also noted the impact this infusion of funds would have on community-based mental healthcare. "Community mental health agencies are suffering a slow torture as costs increase and rates remain constant. *Reinvestment II* and the other proposed increases will effect necessary repairs on the financial base of these hard-working and devoted agencies."

Sadly, the Union's ad misrepresents the trend over the last ten years to provide those who are liv-

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## Wishful thinking

In the last issue of Briefs, (Luster Introduces Parity, 2/13/01) we reported that both the Senate and the Assembly had passed parity legislation last year. Sadly, we were half wrong. While the Assembly did, indeed, pass a parity bill, the Senate did not—though we are ever hopeful we will soon be able to report that news. Nonetheless, we regret the error. ✍

## Mayor's 2002 financial plan proposes deep MH cuts

Further analysis of Mayor Giuliani's financial plan for the next five years reveal steep cuts for a variety of programs in mental health that are typically funded by the City Council. In past years, when the Mayor has proposed similar cuts, they have been restored at the same level by the City Council.

As it stands now, the Mayor has proposed cutting programs to the tune of slightly more than \$4 million dollars for fiscal year 2002. These cuts are extremely targeted— the Coalition's Managed Care Technical Assistance program (also known as the Professional Learning Center) currently has a grant for \$100,000, which is cut in its entirety in the Mayor's plan.

Other cuts include:

► **Enhanced Revenue Collections** **\$1 million**

This decrease in city funding offsets increases in state funding: as the COPs rate increases at the state level, the city will decrease funding of deficit-funded agencies by an equal amount. Agencies will experience no net increase in funding; this merely transfers some funding liability from the city to the state.

► **Alcoholism and Substance Abuse** **\$1.7 million**

Cuts include \$1 million the City Council funded in 1999 for alcohol prevention education, and \$500,000 the city council funded in 1998 for teen alcohol prevention. Lastly, the \$200,000 the City Council allocated for an alcohol treatment facility at La Bodega will be cut.

► **Case Management Services** **\$750,000**

This also includes City Council funded programs. \$500,000 for case management, and \$250,000 for forensic services provided by Fordham-Tremont.

► **Family Support Services** **\$100,000**

Five parent resource centers at \$20,000 each have been eliminated. They were originally funded by the City Council

► **Early Retirement** **\$409,000**

This is due to standard attrition. Positions will only be reinstated at a 1:2 ratio. For every two people that leave, only one will be replaced.

As is clear from this run-down, most decreases are in programs that were originally funded by the City Council. Unfortunately, this just makes The Coalition and mental health programs dispensable in Mayor Giuliani's budget game with the City Council. For more information, call David Bergman at x102. ✍

## This just in!

As we were going to press, we received word that the Assembly has passed the Work and Wellness Act. This important legislation, also known as Medicaid Buy-In, will enable people with disabilities to accept jobs that pay above the poverty line. Existing regulations effectively make people with disabilities choose between work and healthcare. We applaud Speaker Silver and the bill's sponsor Assemblyman Brennan for their hard work and appreciate the Assembly's support for this important legislation.

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## Ticket-to-Work Regulations

The Social Security Administration announced last week that Tickets for the Ticket to Work program will not be mailed out until after March. Because New York is one of the 13 states selected to pilot the program, this news comes as a great relief to many who were concerned that the Tickets would be mailed out too soon.

The Ticket to Work and Self Sufficiency Program, signed into law by President Clinton last year, provides Social Security beneficiaries with a "ticket" to use at an employment network of their choice to obtain employment services, vocational rehabilitation services and other supports.

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel of the Social Security Administration held a public meeting and teleconference on Wednesday February 21, 2001. The meeting was well attended and allowed the advisory panel to collect ideas and hear public comment on the proposed regulations issued from SSA on December 28, 2000.

Many who spoke at the meeting felt that while the concepts behind the TWWIA legislation reflect a progressive attitude regarding moving individuals with disabilities to greater independence through a system of personal choice, there

were many serious issues to be resolved regarding program implementation. Several voiced the concern that the tickets would be released too soon before the program could be better defined and the problems addressed. Transcribed comments from the meeting will be available on-line shortly at [www.ssa.gov/work](http://www.ssa.gov/work).

Public comments on the regulations proposed by Social Security to implement the Ticket To Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act were due on Monday February 26, 2001. Requests for Quotations (RFQs) for potential Employment Networks may be posted in the Federal Registry by the end of February.

## Advertise Employment Events

As a service to the mental health community, the NY Work Exchange would like to post on our website your agency's events that are related to our goal of increasing employment. Greater numbers of individuals use the internet as a primary source of information, and we can help you publicize your training seminars, speakers, celebrations, etc. that take place within the five boroughs. We can also post your job openings that are employment related. You can either fax the information to the number below or complete the information online at our web site, [www.nyworkexchange.org](http://www.nyworkexchange.org). If you are interested in this service, please fax your information to Holly Kempner at (212) 742-2132 or via email to [hkempner@nyworkexchange.org](mailto:hkempner@nyworkexchange.org).

## Upcoming Events

3/5	10:00 am	Children's Committee Meeting
3/6	3:00 pm	Housing Committee Meeting
3/13	9:00 am	MHA-NYC and SOMH present "Looking at Depression, Schizophrenia and Addiction in the Elderly." Call (212) 254-0333 x508 for more info.
3/22	9:30 am	PLC - Seminar - Confidentiality and its Limits
3/23	10:00 am	Coalition Membership Meeting
3/26	3:00 pm	Government Relations Committee Meeting

## Urban Justice handbook

A new handbook, *When a person with a mental illness is arrested: How to Help* has been made available to the mental health community by The Urban Justice Center's Mental Health Project. This 30 page booklet, for family members, friends, peer advocates and community mental health workers in New York City offers practical information on 1) how to locate a consumer who has been arrested; 2) how to ensure that someone receives appropriate psychiatric care while in jail; and 3) how to work with the consumer's defense attorney to advocate for a disposition to the case that will lead to treatment rather than incarceration. The handbook contains dozens of phone numbers for jails, courts, defender services, etc. Contact Heather Barr at (646) 602-5671 or [hbarr@urbanjustice.org](mailto:hbarr@urbanjustice.org) to obtain copies.

Those requesting multiple copies will be asked to pay \$3 per copy to offset printing and postage costs. Checks can be made payable to the Urban Justice Center and mailed to Heather Barr at the Urban Justice Center, 666 Broadway, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10012.

Community Mental Health  <b>GETS MY VOTE</b>	Tell the world! Order your lapel button from The Coalition Web site today! <a href="http://www.cvmha.org">www.cvmha.org</a>
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## Reinvestment II

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ing with mental disabilities with the necessary supports to live in their own communities. While the ad is correct in noting that community-based care is more cost effective than institutionalization in state psychiatric hospitals, it fails to note that community care also enables people with mental illnesses to live more fulfilling, productive lives in the communities where they already live. What is more, the legislation redirects the funding back into the community, increasing capacity and providing a vital adjustment to a sorely eroded service base.

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## Save the Date

**Tuesday  
June 5, 2001  
5-8 pm**

The Coalition of Voluntary  
Mental Health Agencies  
Celebrates  
the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Mental Health Awards  
At Pfizer World Headquarters

For tickets and  
information,  
call Judeth Podell at  
(212) 742-1600 x104.

## Consumer Advocacy Seminar

The Urban Justice Center's Mental Health Project has announced two introductory sessions designed to teach advocacy skills to consumers in the areas of welfare, Medicaid Managed Care, SSI/SSD, Housing Law, and Legislative Advocacy.

The sessions will outline the curriculum and explain the details of the 12-week training course which will begin in April. The sessions will be on March 8, 2:00-5:00 pm, and March 29, 2:00-5:00 at The Coalition.

For more information, call Barney at (646) 602-5672.

## — Help Offered —

Grant Writing Assistance:  
Suri Duitch is a development and writing consultant with a background in mental health, health and social service issues and extensive experience with grant writing, policy writing and analysis, program development and administration. Reasonable rates, quick turnaround time. Contact her at 718-230-5755 or suri@nycfuture.org.

## — Help Wanted —

The **Children's Aid Society** has innovative & progressive neighborhood-based Foster Care, Preventive, Community School and Community Center programs. Growth opportunities are available for energetic social service professionals providing clinical & community-based work w/children & their families. Superior salaries, benefits, graduate education opportunities and excellence awards for meritorious performance.

The **CAS** Early Intervention Program has immediate openings

for New York State certified professionals to conduct center-based and/or home-based developmental assessments of children birth through three years old. Consultants are needed in the following disciplines: Certified Social Workers, Licensed Psychologists (doctorate required), Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Physical Therapists. Applicants should be approved as Individual Evaluators through the NYS Dept. of Health. Fax or mail resumes to Lauren Levy, EIP Coordinator at (212) 682-8016, The Children's Aid Society, 150 East

45th Street, New York, NY 10017.

Foster care openings include: Social Workers for community-based programs in the Bronx, Staten Island & Manhattan, and our city-wide program for children with special medical needs; and an Intake Case Aide. See [www.ChildrensAidSociety.org](http://www.ChildrensAidSociety.org) for details. Fax letter & resume to Steve Bacher at (212) 682-8016.

Psychiatrist - P/T consultant to work on Staten Island in a mental health clinic serving children and families. Call (718) 447-2630.



### Mental Health Managed Care Consumer Advocacy and Ombudsprogram Managed Care Hotline (646) 602-5675

Information about managed care for Medicaid, Medicare and other insurance including exemptions/exclusions, disenrollments, access to care, and grievances. Advice, dispute resolution, representation at Fair Hearings and other administrative hearings as well as educational materials and training seminars. For immediate assistance on managed care issues or to receive a free copy of our pamphlet, *Medicaid Managed Care Health Plans: A Fact Sheet for the Mental Health Community*, please call our Managed Care Hotline at (646) 602-5675.