



Coalition Briefs

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

Medicaid Buy-In

Disability advocacy groups have swung into high gear this month working to ensure the inclusion of a strong Medicaid buy-in program in this year's state budget. Through a campaign of phone calls and visits, advocates urged State Senators to support the stronger Medicaid buy-in proposal found in S. 1691, the Work and Wellness Act of 2001. Adopting the Medicaid buy-in program would allow the working disabled to sustain Medicaid eligibility and purchase health-care coverage on a sliding scale based on earnings.

Governor Pataki has been commended for supporting the buy-in program, however his proposal of the bill has been criticized for being much more conservative than the Assembly's version. Pataki's buy-in proposal places stronger limits on salaries and savings levels, and does not opt to provide demonstration programs for those with potentially disabling conditions like HIV.

The buy-in proposal supported by advocates, the Assembly, and proposed by Senator Marchi, allows individuals with disabilities to earn up to \$70,000 annually (for couples up to \$94,000) and still be eligible to buy Medicaid health coverage. The Governor's proposal capped the income level at \$44,000 per year (\$58,000 for couples). The Assembly's version raises the income resource limits from \$10,000 to \$40,000. It also provides for a demonstration project to include individuals with potentially disabling conditions like HIV or early diagnosis multiple sclerosis. The buy-in proposal guarantees Medicaid eligibility for one year following termination of employment. In addition, it creates an advisory board that provides cross-disability consumer representation. ❧

Mental Health Awardees, Part II

As mentioned in the previous Briefs (5/17/01), The Coalition is presenting four honors at the Mental Health Awards on June 5th for outstanding service to Mental Health in New York. Susan Chan of **Hamilton Madison House** who will receive a Founders Award and Surgeon General David Satcher who will receive a Mental Health Award were profiled in the last edition. Governor George Pataki and the United Way of New York will also receive Mental Health Awards. We are pleased to present their profiles here.

Hon. George E. Pataki: Governor of New York

In the seven years since his election in 1994, Governor Pataki has shown a unique dedication to funding mental health services. His program to expand medical coverage to children became a national model and has served more than half a million of New York's children.

In recent years, he has provided a new and significant funding stream—more than \$125 million—for programs associated with an assisted outpatient treatment law. In the current budget proposal, the Governor has proposed mental health funding that would bolster community based services by moving \$112 million from costly and underutilized hospital-based care.

A native of Peekskill, New York Governor Pataki grew up on a family farm, which he still runs with his family. He is a 1967 graduate of Yale University and a 1970 graduate of Columbia Law School.

United Way of New York: Fostering Independence

As part of the Targeted Needs Fund, the United Way of New York City (UWNYC) began in 1999 to develop a grantmaking initiative to improve the "formal and informal system of care for people with disabilities." The report that followed was an extremely well thought-out and thorough analysis of gaps in the current array of services for people with mental and developmental disabilities. The main thrust of this fund is to support services that encourage self-sufficiency.

After consulting providers, advocates, academics, funders, state employees and consumers, UWNYC identified four main areas for targeted funding in mental health and developmental disabilities: timely identification and intervention; family support, long-term stability, and

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Breaking News!

- ▶ Staten Island State Senator John Marchi introduced last week a bill (S5381) that mirror's the parity bill introduced in the Assembly by Mental Health Chair Martin Luster. Thank you to Sen. Marchi .
- ▶ The Feds have approved New York State's Family Health Plus program. It will roll out in September. Details to follow. ❧

Upcoming Events

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| June 5 | 5:00 pm | MENTAL HEALTH AWARDS |
| June 6 | 10:00 am | Children's Committee |
| June 14 | 11:00 am | Membership Meeting
<u>AT THE JEWISH BOARD</u> |
| June 19 | 10:00 am | Membership Meeting: "Implementing Optimal Treatment: A Model Program" |

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Training for Job Coaches

On June 11-14, New York Work Exchange will present a truly unique interactive seminar series: "JOB COACH I: Job Development and Placement Strategies", and "JOB COACH II: Training and Support Strategies That Work". Employment program personnel from New York City mental health programs were invited to attend these workshops. Presenter, Connie Ferrell, MSW, is a Supported Employment Consultant with Integrated Services in Indiana and is an adjunct faculty member at Cornell. Ms. Ferrell has worked extensively with the mental health and developmental disability community, helping agencies to develop supported employment options since 1981.

Registration is now closed but if you are interested in being added to the waiting list, please call Debbi at 212 742-1122 x209. If you have made a reservation and are unable to attend, please let us know as soon as possible so that someone else can go in your stead.

SSI Back-Payment

SSI beneficiaries should expect a small back payment from the Social Security Administration in July. This is due to an error made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics who miscalculated the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for the year 2000. The COLA increase, received annually, is based on the Consumer Price Index. The 2000 COLA increase should have been 2.5 percent instead of the 2.4 percent received by beneficiaries. The back payment is expected to be between \$12 and \$19 for most people.

New Panel Website

The Ticket to Work and Work

Incentive Advisory Panel launched its new website on May 8, 2001. Visitors can now access information about the Panel and its members, official Panel reports, recommendations, and events. The site also contains links to the Office of Employment Support Programs for updates on SSA's implementation of the Ticket legislation. Under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Act, the Panel was created to advise the President, Congress and the Commissioner of Social Security on issues related to the implementation of the Ticket to Work program.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

VESID is now requesting nominations to recognize employers throughout the New York City Region for "their outstanding commitment in providing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities." This is part of the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) happening in October 2001. This year's theme is "Win with Ability." Employers in the ten regions across the state will be presented awards on behalf of the Governor, the New York State Board of Regents, and the NYS Regional Employment Alliance. There are five categories and each region will award one nominee per category. Before nominating an employer, VESID recommends that employers are contacted first to verify their interest in being considered for recognition. Nominations are due by June 30, 2001 at the Manhattan VESID office c/o Lucy Varela, 116 West 32nd St, NY, NY 10001. Nominations can also be faxed to Lucy at 212-695-1691. A nomination form is now available on-line and can be submitted electronically at www.vesid.nysed.gov/employers/ndeam.htm. To request this form or for any questions, please call Lucy Varela at 212-630-2309.

Mental Health Awards

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recovery of high risk consumers.

Since the report was released in December of 1999, UWNYC has funded a number of individual programs in the identified areas. What is more, their focus on this area has brought additional attention to the needs of people with mental illnesses.

The United Way is a dependable leader in support of social services in New York City. Their spotlight on people with psychiatric disabilities— and their care givers— is a stellar example of outstanding community service.

Congratulations Governor Pataki and United Way of New York City. And thank you for your important work! ✍

— Help Wanted —

Social Worker in a Continuing Day Treatment Program for The Bowery Residents' Committee. Serving a primarily SPMI and homeless population many of whom have co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Duties: intake and assessment, individual and group therapy, treatment and discharge planning, case management, as well as vocational assessment and referrals. Competitive salary and excellent benefits. July 1 start date. Fax resume to Mark Iskowitz, Program Director, at 212-533-1893. ✍

Director of Foundation Development at The Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service. A senior-level position overseeing solicitations that raise revenues for general and critical initiatives. Manages a staff of three and reports to Executive Director. Heavily involved in budget projections, Board relations, and program development. Must possess superior analytic, oral, writing and leadership skills; be an effective collaborator; meet many deadlines; handle multiple tasks; cultivate productive liaisons with many constituencies. BA required, MA preferred. Minimum 5 years related experience. Send resume and salary needs to Barry Newmark, BBBS, 285 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217. Fax: 718-310-5720. E-mail: bnewmark@bbcs.org. ✍