



Coalition Briefs

FLASH

BREAKING NEWS ABOUT COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN NEW YORK

OMH's FEMA grant approved by Feds

In the wake of the tragedy on September 11, the State Office of Mental Health (SOMH) quickly completed and submitted a grant application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a variety of crisis counseling services. The grant was approved for \$22.7 million, of which \$14 million is earmarked for services in New York City. Importantly, the FEMA representative stated that funds can be retroactively applied to counseling services that were rendered in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy so long as agencies document costs. The Coalition will send out reporting guidelines when they are available.

FEMA funding comes in two waves which each require different grant applications. Once an emergency is declared by the President, States have 14 days to submit a grant under the Immediate Services Plan (ISP). This grant period only covers services rendered in the first 60 days—until November 10 in this case. By this date, the State must submit a grant under the Regular Services Plan (RSP). ISP dollars can also be used for an additional 60 days to cover any gap in services while the RSP grant is pending. For additional information, visit the web site at (<http://www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs/EmergencyServices/servprog.htm>).

Counties and New York City must also prepare service plans which are then approved by the State in order to draw down funds for disbursement to agencies. Although the exact mechanism for this disbursement is currently unspecified for New York City, it will utilize existing relationships between the City Department of Mental Health and mental health agencies.

It is estimated that 2.3 million people in the New York City area will require counseling services related to the World Trade Center disaster. Experts anticipate that depression, family problems and relapse, not post-traumatic stress disorder, will be the primary ailments. The Coalition estimates that related mental hygiene treatment services will cost in excess of \$250 million over the next year.

For additional information and daily updates, check The Coalition's Web site at www.cvmha.org. ●