



Helping People Move Forward

newbridge.org

Summer 2017

Letter from the CEO



Dear Friend,

NewBridge Services and other community mental health nonprofits across New Jersey are preparing for the fallout from the state's July 1 change to how it funds public mental health services.

For 40-plus years, community mental health providers operated under the mantra, "No one is refused treatment because they can't afford it." New Jersey backed the pledge by guaranteeing to cover expenses that community mental health providers couldn't recoup from clients.

Under the new fee-for-service funding, providers will be reimbursed by the state for certain "billable" services, but not others, and in some cases at rates that do not cover actual costs. Payments will be withheld when clients miss session, despite the fact that is a common occurrence for people with serious mental illness. (It's estimated appointments are missed 20 to 30 percent of the time.)

The working poor who have private insurance or coverage through the Affordable Care Act will have to meet high deductibles and copays. That's because the state will cease providing grants that in the past helped cover insurance deductibles and copays.

NewBridge has had to restructure in anticipation of reduced revenue under fee-for-service funding. This restructuring will allow NewBridge to continue offering our current array of services.

NewBridge has strongly advocated for financial safeguards and will continue to do so. I am

heartened by bipartisan legislation introduced in both the Senate and the General Assembly that would ensure state funds to reimburse community mental health providers should they face funding shortfalls in the first year of the fee-for-service model.

In the meantime, we will do our best to live our mission of bringing balance to people's lives through counseling, housing and education. So many of our communities' most vulnerable residents rely on NewBridge. We cannot let them down.

More than ever, we rely on the generosity of our supporters to help us do our best to fill the cracks that inevitably will occur in the system of community mental health. Please make a donation today at newbridge.org/donate or mail a check to Victoria Hess, NewBridge Director of Development, P.O. Box 336, Pompton Plains NJ 07444. Call Vicki Hess at (973) 939-2427 if you have questions.

You also can help by contacting your state representatives and urging them to support the Community Mental Health Safety Net Act (S-3121 and A-4827). Find your legislators here:

<http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/districts/municipalities.asp>. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Robert L. Parker