



For Immediate Release
Contact: Glenn Liebman, CEO, MHANYS
518-360-7916 gliebman@mhanys.org
May 8, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

Behavioral Health Advocacy Organizations to SFY 2025-26 Enacted Budget: Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Not a Priority for New Yorkers

*Statewide Advocates Disappointed in 2.6% Targeted Inflationary Increase in
Final Budget for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services and
Supports*

Eleven statewide advocacy organizations representing New York's adults, children, and families with mental health and addiction related needs, and the community-based service providers who support them across our state, are deeply disappointed to only see a 2.6% Targeted Inflationary Increase in the SFY 2025-26 enacted budget.

This increase once again falls short of the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) in July 2024 which was 2.9%. The 2.6% in the SFY 2025-26 budget clearly demonstrates that our mental health and addiction treatment workforce and community-based agencies that serve the most vulnerable New Yorkers with mental health and substance use disorder needs are **NOT A PRIORITY** for Governor Hochul and the Legislature.

New Yorkers continue to experience long waiting periods to access mental health and substance use disorder services through New York's community-based continuum of care while demand is at an all-time high. Further, mental health and addiction prevention, treatment recovery and harm reduction agencies struggling with inflationary costs such as transportation, utilities, food, etc. are experiencing a [statewide 20% - 30% job vacancy rate based on program type and 35% turnover rate.](#)

"In the midst of one of the most pressing mental health crises of our time, the 2.6% inflationary increase falls far too short of what's needed to support hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers in need, said Harvey Rosenthal, CEO of the **Alliance for Rights and Recovery**. "As more workers leave due to low pay and high stress, people seeking services are left to navigate even longer waitlists and the instability of constantly having to rebuild trust with new staff. This decision doesn't just impact agencies—it harms New Yorkers relying on the agencies for recovery support, stability, and hope."

“We are told we are a priority, but this year’s budget says something different. The 2.6% increase in this year’s budget doesn’t come close to the 7.8% loss to inflation we’ve had to absorb in just the past three years”, said Doug Cooper, Interim Executive Director at the **Association for Community Living**. “Just like every other household, residential programs need to cover increases for groceries, utilities, and other expenses required to run a home. We serve some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and are living through a staffing crisis. Our programs are experiencing a 30% staff vacancy rate along with a 50% annual turnover rate. If mental health is a priority in New York State, where is the support?”

“It is distressing that the state budget did not provide adequate funding to meet the rising Consumer Price Index (CPI) of 2.9%. The opioid overdose crisis remains with the deaths of 6,330 New Yorkers dying in 2023, and deaths due to overdose increasing five times for Black New Yorkers and quadrupling for Latino New Yorkers. Providers cannot respond to this crisis when reimbursement does not keep pace with rising costs and our workforce cannot make ends meet,” said Allegra Schorr, President of the **Coalition of Medication Assisted Treatment Providers and Advocates (COMPA)**.

“We are deeply disappointed that the final state budget once again falls short in addressing the urgent and growing need for mental health services in our communities. This omission is not just a policy failure; it is a moral one. The lack of sufficient investment in mental health services will result in suffering for countless individuals and families. It sends a disheartening message that, even with vocal public demand, mental health remains an afterthought rather than a priority. We cannot continue to speak about equity, public safety, and community well-being while ignoring the very foundation on which these goals rest: accessible, quality mental health care. This is a missed opportunity to lead with compassion and courage,” said Paige Pierce, CEO, **Families Together in NYS**.

“Delaying services until New Yorkers are in crisis is not only inhumane but also fiscally irresponsible. Now more than ever, we must implement cost-effective strategies within our health care system. Evidence consistently shows that addressing substance use and mental health disorders generates a strong return on investment. To achieve these outcomes, it is imperative that we invest in the workforce and infrastructure that enable prevention, early intervention, and sustained access to care”, said Debbian Fletcher-Blake, APRN, FNP, President and CEO, VIP Community Services; Board Chair, **InUnity Alliance**.

“The Mental Health Association in New York State is extremely disappointed that the final state budget agreement rejected our requested 7.8% inflationary increase for community-based human service providers, said Glenn Liebman, CEO, **Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS)**. “The approved 2.6% increase is, once again, below the consumer price index. This follows almost two decades in which state funding for community-based providers is an alarming 35% below inflation for those years. Inadequate state reimbursement is jeopardizing the continued operation of these programs, and high staff vacancy rates are preventing access to services to those in need, all at a time when the state is facing an unprecedented mental health crisis.”

"The ongoing mental health crisis in New York State requires expanded access to care—

and that simply isn't possible without a strong and supported behavioral health workforce," said James Norton, Government and Community Affairs Manager at **NAMI NYS**. "The proposed 2.6% Cost of Living Adjustment falls short—not only of current inflation rates, but of what's needed to sustain our mental health system. If we want to grow services to meet the rising demand, we must do more to support those who care for us."

"Our care management agencies continue to provide front-line services and support to adults, children and families, with mental health and substance use disorder needs, often in crisis. The 2.6% targeted inflationary increase included in the SFY 2025-26 budget does not include health home care management under the Department of Health. The workforce who takes care of those who are medically complex with significant mental health needs will once again not be included in this funding. And care management agencies who provide frontline services continue to have difficulty sustaining operations. Timely access to services remains a concern for our most vulnerable adults, children and families," said Jackie Negri, Executive Director, **NYS Care Management Coalition**.

"We are disheartened that, after dragging on over a month into the new fiscal year, state budget negotiations resulted in little meaningful investment in the mental health of New York's youth," said **Kayleigh Zaloga, President and CEO of the NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health**. "A 2.6% rate increase will help some child-serving providers continue to serve their communities, but it does not effectively counter this year's inflation or prior years' shortfalls. As a result, children and families will continue to face dangerously long wait times for care, service providers will continue to lose staff and close programs, and frontline workers who support families through their most difficult times will continue struggling to make ends meet. Our provider members are doing everything they can to hold the child-serving system together, but they cannot do it alone. In a federal landscape where the best we can hope for is uncertainty, New York's youth and families are counting on the state to prioritize their mental health now and in the future."

About Behavioral Health Advocates

Behavioral Health Advocates is comprised of eleven statewide organizations that have come together representing adult and children service providers, families, peers, and other stakeholders to achieve common goals within the behavioral health sector.

The organizations are: [Association for Community Living](#), [Coalition of Medication-Assisted Treatment Providers and Advocates of New York State \(COMP\)](#), [Families Together in New York State](#), [InUnity Alliance](#), [Mental Health Association in New York State](#), [National Alliance on Mental Illness New York State \(NAMI\)](#), [New York State Care Management Coalition](#), [New York State Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health](#), [NYS Council for Community Behavioral Health Care](#), [Alliance for Rights and Recovery](#), and [Supportive Housing Network of New York](#)