



With Fewer Psych Beds, Need for Supported Housing Grows

Local mental health advocates Tuesday expressed support for the ongoing shift from inpatient to community-based care.

At a budget hearing on mental hygiene, they applauded the state's commitment to invest \$11 million in community-based mental health services to make up for the 100 inpatient beds the state plans to cut from the Office of Mental Health hospital system in fiscal year 2019. But advocates also called on the state to address their concern that supported housing—subsidized housing with social services attached—is severely underfunded. The executive budget includes \$10 million for existing supported housing and single-room-occupancy programs. **The Bring It Home** campaign that many advocacy groups have joined says those funds should be increased to \$120 million annually.

"Our deep concerns about the community-based mental health house system is magnified due to the changing systems which deliver mental health care in New York state," said Wendy Burch, executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness-New York State, in the written testimony she submitted Tuesday.

Since fiscal year 2015, the state has cut more than 650 inpatient psychiatric beds and placed about 1,300 more people in supported housing with associated social services. She added that while the state is investing in new community-based services it should invest more resources to address the shortage of mental health professionals