



New York State

2019 Legislative Action Agenda

Continued Investments in the Mental Health Workforce and Community Services

The methods for delivering mental health services in New York State are changing. The number of hospital beds dedicated to treating psychiatric disorders is shrinking. This is very concerning to NAMI-NYS as many of our members have experienced both the tremendous benefits that hospital care has for our loved ones with serious mental illness, as well as the tragic and heart-breaking results of what happens when someone with the most debilitating forms of mental illness do not receive the housing and services they need. Too many of our members have seen their loved ones end up on the streets, stranded in emergency rooms and complete suicide.

Once again the Governor's budget proposes investing in \$11 million from the savings of eliminating 100 inpatient beds into community services. Though NAMI-NYS does not want to see beds reduced, we strongly believe that the savings from these reductions be reinvested into services that would afford those living with a mental health disorder the best opportunity to advance their recovery in a community setting.

It is impossible to deliver appropriate sustained care without a robust mental health workforce. The state has failed to invest in the dedicated and compassionate workers who provide care for people living with mental illness. This lack of investment has led to difficulty in mental health providers' ability to hire and retain staff. **NAMI-NYS is alarmed by the high turnover and vacancy rates among providers. This is why we are calling for a 2.9% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for non-profit human services agencies. We are disappointed this was not included in the Governor's budget proposal.**

In November, it was announced that NYS's hospitals and nursing homes will receive \$675m for Medicaid rate increases to cover workforce salary and benefits. **NAMI-NYS is calling for 25% of the state's share of the investment, roughly \$169m, be used to support community-based care.** [Click here](#) to watch NAMI-NYS discuss community investments on Capital Tonight.

NAMI-NYS wants to see community support services in New York State which ensure:

- Practices and services that are recovery, resiliency and wellness oriented, culturally competent and readily accessible
- Residential support services with transportation services and intensive case management
- The availability of all appropriate and effective medications
- Access to both inpatient and outpatient treatment options
- Vocational Training
- Wellness
- Round-the-clock services that are available seven days a week
- That no one would have to travel more than an hour to get to a psychiatric emergency room or crisis service unit.

