Care for Those Who Care for Us: Support the Mental Health Workforce With a 5.4% COLA and $500 Million Investment for Workforce, Services and Support

At a time when New Yorkers are seeking behavioral health services at an all-time high rate, NYS needs to ensure we have the services to meet this increasing demand. Even before the pandemic mental health providers were struggling due to decades of flat-funding. The appropriate investments must be made to meet the ever-growing demand for mental health services and support for New York to recover and move forward.

- NAMI-NYS applauds Governor Hochul for including funding for a 5.4% COLA for the behavioral health work force and $104 million for residential (mental health housing) programs in her Executive Budget and urges the New York State Legislature to keep these much needed investments in the final budget.
- Behavioral Health advocates also called for a $500 million investment in workforce, service and support to address the years of inadequate funding. This was not included in its entirety in the proposed Executive budget and NAMI-NYS is hopeful that the Legislature will add funding to address any unmet need for the behavioral health sector.

Create Mental Health Responses to a Mental Health Crisis
Fund 9-8-8 and Improve the Criminal Justice – Mental Illness Interface

The time is now to address one of the greatest social justice issues of our time and ensure that a mental health crisis is met with a mental health response. The failure to provide a mental health response has led to people with mental illness being over represented in the criminal justice system and too dependent on hospital emergency rooms and other services not designed to meet their needs. NYS has an incredible opportunity with the implementation of the 9–8–8 Mental Health Crisis number to create a true mental health response. To do so, the state must fund 9–8–8 and pair it with mobile mental health response teams, crisis stabilization services and advance critical criminal justice reform legislation.

- Support Gov Hochul’s 988 Funding Proposal- 988 must be funded in order to provide 24/7/365 statewide coverage offered by in-state providers with the ability to provide local resources in a linguistically and culturally competent manner. NAMI-NYS supports Gov Hochul’s proposal of $35m in FY 2022-23 and $60m in FY 2023-24 for 988.
- Support A.4697/S.4814 Daniel’s Law- Ensures that a mental health crisis is met with a mental health response by having mobile mental health response units handle mental health calls in our communities.
- Expand Crisis Stabilization Services which provide appropriate Mental Health care to those experiencing a Mental Health crisis.
- Support A.6399-A/S.1553-B The Clean Slate Act- Which automatically expunges certain convictions after 3 years for a misdemeanor and 7 years for a felony if certain criteria are met.
- Support A.6603/S.2881- Expands the use of specialty courts, such as mental health, addiction and veteran courts.

Ensure Access to Appropriate Services and Medication

Access to mental health services and appropriate medications is more important than ever. As the demand for mental health services is at an all-time high, we must meet this demand and ensure that people have access to the medications, treatments and supports their doctors determine are most beneficial to them and have these recovery tools covered.

- Ensure prescriber prevails language for Medicaid services in the final budget.
- Support A.3276 The Mental Health Access Bill- Which prohibits insurance providers from using “fail-first” and “step-up” procedures for psychiatric medication. This bill passed the Senate in 2021 and now we need the Assembly to act.
- Support (NEED NEW) Nicole’s Law: Which addresses suicide by reforming hospital practices and enhancing discharge.
- Support AS238/S3995 Mental Health Parity Amendment- Amending the NYS Constitution to ensure mental health parity.
- Support A.3840/S.4870 Allowing pharmacies to administer injectable medications.
- Support A.5751/S.3221 Which would grant LMHCs and LCS the ability to diagnose.
- Support S7865, S7753, S7752 (Assembly bills TBA)-Maternal Mental Health Package which would address disparities in care, increase prenatal and postnatal care and improve postpartum depression screening tools.

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