



March 14, 2018

The Honorable Richard N. Gottfried
New York State Assembly Member
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
NYS Legislative Office Building Room 822
Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable Kemp Hannon
New York State Senator
Chair, Senate Health Committee
NYS Capitol Room 420
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Assemblyman Gottfried and Senator Hannon,

The Mental Health Association of New York State (MHANYS), the National Alliance on Mental Illness-New York State (NAMI-NYS) and the New York Association for Psychiatric Rehabilitative Services (NYAPRS) together represent individuals and families impacted by psychiatric disorders and the providers of psychiatric services. We all firmly believe that a person-centered approach to treatment of mental health issues is paramount to recovery. The person-centered approach is based on a doctor or provider viewing each person they treat as an individual with unique symptoms and needs. While medication is not necessary for every psychiatric treatment, for those who do believe medication will advance their recovery, a key to doing so with a person-centered approach is their ability to receive the medication their doctors think will best address their ailments.

This necessary tool to recovery is once again threatened by Governor Cuomo and his Executive Budget Proposal which removes prescriber prevails for Medicaid recipients. This is very concerning to us.

Providing someone living with a mental illness with the medication the person's doctor believes is best suited to the symptoms is crucial. This is especially true for those with the most serious forms of mental illness including schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder. These psychotic disorders impact each individual differently; thus each case must be viewed and handled uniquely and a consumer must be able to continue a drug regimen prescribed by the doctor after reviewing specific symptoms and other medications that the person is taking. Antipsychotic and antidepressant medications are not clinically interchangeable and patients respond differently to different antipsychotic and antidepressant medications. Many people with a mental illness also have co-occurring physical ailments and drug-to-drug interactions also must be considered when prescribing.

Restoring prescriber-prevails would address these concerns and give the one in five New Yorkers living with a psychiatric disorder the best chance to achieve recovery. We are asking you to use your chairmanship of the legislative health committees to advocate to restore prescriber prevails during the budget negotiations.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wendy Burch
Executive Director
NAMI-NYS

Glenn Liebman
CEO
MHANYS

Harvey Rosenthal
Executive Director
NYAPRS