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New York State

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January 11, 2017

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

On behalf of the thousands of members represented by the National Alliance on Mental Illness-New York State (NAMI-NYS) we want to express our gratitude to you for signing S-3419C into law. We applaud you for putting the needs of those living with chronic diseases ahead of decisions made by insurance plans that are focused solely on profit margins.

NAMI-NYS is the state chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the country's largest grassroots organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families impacted by mental illness. It has always been central to our beliefs that decisions on a person's medical care should be made by that person and his/her doctors, based on what is believed to be most appropriate in advancing one's own individual recovery.

For too long, fail-first policies presented a roadblock to recovery by not providing medications doctors felt to be most appropriate. Regulating fail-first policies is very important to treating mental illnesses as medications that treat psychiatric disorders are not interchangeable. This is why we are so thankful to you for advancing regulations of this dangerous practice. Your actions have helped create a more mentally healthy New York State.

Sincerely,

Judith Watt, MSRN
President

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Executive Director

Irene Turski
Government Affairs Chair

CC:

Alphonso David, Counsel

Axel Bernabe, Assistant Counsel

Maria Vullo, Superintendent, Department of Financial Services

Howard Zucker, MD, JD, Commissioner, New York State Department of Health

Anne Marie Sullivan, MD, Commissioner, New York State Office of Mental Health

Senator Catharine Young

Assemblyman Matthew Titone

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University of Hartford

January 11, 2017

The Honorable Catharine Young
New York State Senator
New York State Capitol Office 428
Albany, NY 12228

Dear Senator Young,

Enclosed you will find the letter that the National Alliance on Mental Illness-New York State (NAMI-NYS) sent to Governor Cuomo expressing our gratitude for his signing S-3419A / A-2834A into law.

We want to also express our most heartfelt appreciation to you for sponsoring the bill and your unwavering leadership during the arduous fight to get it passed. Despite the long uphill journey this legislation faced you remained steadfast in your belief that New York State must do all it can to put the needs of those living with chronic diseases ahead of concerns by insurance plans that are focused solely on profit margins.

NAMI-NYS is the state chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the country's largest grassroots organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families impacted by mental illness. It has always been central to our beliefs that decisions on a person's medical care should be made by that person and his/her doctors, based on what is believed to be most appropriate in advancing one's individual recovery. During the advocacy process for the bill it was exciting to work in coalition with a large group of patient organizations which share this ideal. We are all extremely grateful to you for representing us and for your refusal to relent despite strong opposition.

Your leadership and commitment for this issue has truly helped create a healthier New York State. Thank you!

Sincerely,



Judith Watt, MSRN
President



Wendy Burch
Executive Director



Irene Turski
Government Affairs Chair