



Coalition Briefs

A SEMI-MONTHLY UPDATE ON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN NEW YORK

5/6 of the way to 1/2 fare

Half fare fairness on the Metropolitan Transit Authority has ended up requiring two bills over two years. Last year's successful passage of the MTA Half Fair Fairness bill of 1999 was a tremendous victory for mental health consumers and advocates, but was bitter-sweet because of the MTA's refusal to accept the validity of the law as written. Therefore a second bill, a technical amendment, was introduced this year to ensure that the MTA has no possible way to avoid this mandate.

The bill, which was itself amended to ensure that the MTA could not circumvent the will of the legislature, has now passed both houses. A March 8th Senate consent vote was followed on March 13th by an all-but-unanimous 142-2 vote in the Assembly. The bill has been returned to the Senate from whence it will be sent to the Governor for signing. *Briefs* readers should contact the Governor's office at (518) 474-1041 to urge his signature on this important bill. ©

Assembly budget resolution includes a 2% trend for mental health and substance abuse services

Both houses of the legislature produced one-house budget resolutions during this past week. These opening bids in the budget negotiating process are the first official indication of the legislature's priorities as the negotiations begin.

There are some areas of agreement between the two houses. Both would reduce the Governor's proposed allocation to the Office of Mental Health for services oversight. The Senate reduces the \$10 million proposal by \$3 million, the Assembly by \$4 million. Both houses also restore some cuts. \$7.6 million is allocated in each resolution to complete the restoration of the 215 shared staff positions the Governor cut during the fiscal year 2000 budget negotiation process. In addition, the Senate would restore the Governor's proposed elimination of psychiatric research scientist positions with \$1.2 million. The Assembly would allocate \$800,000 to restore 18 psychiatric residency positions the Executive proposed cutting.

The Assembly, however, would make many additions that are not found in the Senate resolution. Foremost among these is an allocation of \$8.83 million to provide a 2% rate adjustment on personal services and other than personal services for all non-residential mental health agencies that operate with a contract. The Executive budget proposal included a 2% adjustment for residential providers. A \$3.5 million allocation for non-contract agencies is also included, sufficient to fund a rate catch-up of between \$10-15 per visit. These non-COPs providers receive the very lowest Medicaid rates. In addition the Assembly would also reprogram the \$15 million medication grants program proposed by the Executive and replace it with a cheaper and more comprehensive \$6 million presumptive Medicaid

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Pushing presumptive Medicaid

With the inclusion of presumptive Medicaid eligibility in the Assembly's one-house budget resolution, the push is on to ensure that presumptive Medicaid eligibility becomes a reality this year. The Campaign for Presumptive Eligibility, of which The Coalition is a part, will be holding a press conference and lobbying trip in Albany on Tuesday March 21st. Speaking at the press conference will be Susan Harrington whose son, due to a lack of presumptive Medicaid eligibility upon his release from jail, was unable to access services and committed suicide.

Briefs readers are encouraged to contact their legislators to stress the importance of presumptive Medicaid eligibility. ©

City Council holds budget hearings

On March 9th, 2000 the New York City Council Health Committee held a preliminary fiscal year 2001 budget hearing. Coalition Executive Director Phillip A. Saperia testified about the harm that would be caused if Mayor Giuliani's proposed cuts were enacted and the need for a trended rate adjustment for mental health care providers. The text of the testimony can be found on our website at www.cvmha.org. ©

Assembly moves to implement new employment legislation

The Assembly's one-house budget resolution includes a \$5 million allocation to enable a Medicaid buy-in option for New Yorkers with mental illness who are able to return to work. The allocation would take advantage of the recently enacted Work Incentives Improvement Act (WIIA).

The WIIA takes several steps to improve the work environment for people with psychiatric disabilities by:

- Removing limits on the Medicaid buy-in option for individuals with disabilities who work. States are af-

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Copious conferences

The Coalition is very pleased to be co-sponsoring a conference entitled *Creating a Mental Health Easy Pass for the Child Welfare system* on April 4th from 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. The Conference costs \$25 and will be held at Fordham University Law School Amphitheater and Atrium. For more information contact Jo-Ann Stone Hoppe at (212) 633-9300 x3495.

On April 2nd, 3rd, and 4th we are co-sponsoring with the New York State Office of Mental Health the *5th Annual Mastering the Key Connection: Clinical Training Conference on Trauma in the Public Mental Health System* at the Crowne Plaza in New York. The conference will cost \$225. Call (212) 254-0333x515 for information.

Along with the Bronx MICA Committee, the New York City Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Alcoholism Services, The New York State Office of Mental Health and Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center, The Coalition is co-sponsoring *Facing New Trends and Treatment Challenges for the year 2000*. Dr. Ken Minkoff, Director of Integrated Psychiatric and Addiction Services at the Choate Health Systems will be presenting. This free conference will take place on Tuesday April 4th from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center. Call (212) 219-5505 for more details.

The Community Residence Insurance Savings Plan is hosting a half-day seminar at the Albany Holiday Inn-Turf on April 4th. The supervisor safety management seminar for human services providers will focus on *Risk Management and Loss Control*. The cost is \$50 for CRISP-SIT participants and \$75 for non-trust attendees. Call (800) 958-7475 for more information.©

One-house resolutions

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eligibility program. Other items funded by the Assembly include: children's and adult treatment services, gambling addiction treatment, suicide prevention, mental health services in homeless shelters, CSP peer-support programs, Links programs for people coming out of the forensic system and school-based mental health services.

The Assembly would also add \$5 million to enable a Medicaid buy-in for people with psychiatric disabilities who return to work but earn less than 250% of the federal poverty level.

Each house also proposed adding substance abuse treatment services, \$5 million in the Senate, \$15 million in the Assembly. The Senate also includes \$2.5 million for community transitional services. The Assembly, meanwhile, adds \$4.8 million for a 2% trend for all substance abuse providers.

Intense negotiations will now begin. The inclusion of the vast majority of our budget priorities in the Assembly one-house bill is a positive sign, but does not guarantee an eventual allocation. That will depend on the ability of the mental health community to influence the legislative leadership over the coming weeks.

Briefs readers are encouraged to contact their Senators and Senate Majority leader Joe Bruno (518-455-3191) to stress the importance of trended rate adjustments to the mental health care and substance abuse services New Yorkers receive. Urge your State Senators to contact Majority Leader Bruno to ensure that he knows the importance of trended adjustments on all behavioral health care rates, grants and fees.©

Goodbye Marilyn...

After three years at The Coalition, Marilyn Kneeland will become Executive Director of the Project for Psychiatric Outreach to the Homeless, Inc. (PPOH) in April. Nonprofit PPOH, now in its 14th year, recruits psychiatrists to volunteer their services in the community at programs for homeless or formerly homeless persons. Each psychiatrist goes to the same program each week for an hour or more, and provides patient care in consultation with case-work staff.

We wish Marilyn well and are sure that we will continue to be in touch (possibly with PPOH as a new Coalition member?). Marilyn can be reached at PPOH at 120 Riverside Drive, #2W, New York, NY 10024, (212) 579-2650, fax (212) 579-2654, or ppoh@aol.com.©

... Hello Ed

Please join us in welcoming Edward C. Smith to our staff as a Senior Policy Analyst. Ed is an attorney whose legal practice in the past twelve years has focused on commercial transactional law and litigation, economic development matters and government relations. Ed will replace the irreplaceable Marilyn Kneeland, taking over a portfolio that includes general legal issues, managed care, elder care and children's services.

After making the decision to relocate to New York City, Ed joined the law firm Fischbein Badillo Wagner & Harding as a senior associate in the commercial litigation department. He hails originally from Philadelphia, PA where he was appointed by a federal judge to serve as a Deputy Special Master and as an Arbitration Judge on two class action matters. In addition to practicing law in both the private and public sectors, Mr. Smith has also served as Legislative Counsel to the Mayor of the City of Philadelphia.

Please feel free to contact Ed at x55 or esmith@cvmha.org.©

Membership meeting

The Coalition's regularly scheduled March 23rd membership meeting (3:30– 5:30 p.m. @ CVMHA) will be a mixture of business and pleasure. In addition to a Farewell Party for Marilyn Kneeland, we will have a brief presentation by Andrea Ryan of the Urban Justice Center about the Mental Health Managed Care Consumer Advocacy and Ombudsprogram, which is jointly sponsored by The Coalition and the Urban Justice Center. Ms. Ryan will outline the program for Coalition members and discuss with them the kinds of Medicaid managed care problems being encountered by consumers of mental health services.©

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Work Incentives

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forded two options to offer Medicaid coverage: 1) States may remove the income limit of 250 percent of poverty (about \$21,000), allowing them to set higher income, unearned income, and resource limits; and 2) States may allow individuals with severe disabilities who lose SSI or SSDI due to an improvement in their condition to continue coverage.

- Extending Medicare coverage for people with disabilities receiving SSDI who return to work by extending Medicare Part A premium coverage for another four and one-half years.
- Creating a "Ticket to Work Program" that allows individuals with disabilities to choose employment services from participating public or private providers.

The Coalition and the New York Work Exchange are very hopeful that New York State will take full advantage of the recent federal initiatives to make competitive employment more accessible for people with serious mental illnesses. ©

— Help Wanted —

Hamilton-Madison House seeks Psychiatrists P/T 8-16 hrs./wk BC/BE Lower Manhattan/Chinatown op clinic, children and adults, call S. Chan at (212) 720-4522. ©

The **Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service** in New York City is seeking a Director of Foundation and Government Funding. The outstanding candidate will be a team player and bring demonstrated skills in communication, critical thinking, conceptualization of social service programs and supervision. Successful experience in managing ambitious public and foundation grant-seeking required. Interested candidates should forward resumes to Eva Toth, DRG, 104 East 40th Street, Suite 304, NY, NY 10016, FAX (212) 983-1687 or e-mail etoth@drgnyc.com. ©

Fordham-Tremont CMHC seeks Clinicians for several programs. NYS CSW or Licensed PhD/PsyD & clinical exp. in MH setting req. Ability to work w/monolingual Spanish-speaking ind. pref. Some programs req. eve. and/or Sat. hrs;

Member Notes

Mental Health Providers of Western Queens is sponsoring two Free Workshops on The Hard to Treat Patient Borderline Level Pathology presented by Ms. Lucia Imbesi, CSW. On April 2, 2000 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. the topic will be *Assessment of Ego Functions and Object Relations*. On April 9, 2000 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. it will be *Treatment Goals & Strategies*. The workshops will take place at 44-04 Queens Blvd., 2nd Fl., Sunnyside, NY 11104. To register call (718) 706-1663. ©

The Association for Rehabilitative Case Management and Housing has released a very encouraging program outcomes report. According to their research, during 1999 40% of their clients were engaged in paid or volunteer employment, 4% participated in job training and 16% were enrolled in school. ©

Case Manager w/ BA/BS in social sci./mental health. Exp. w/forensic pop., chron. Ill and/or w/substance abusers pref. Familiarity w/Bronx social services & fluency in Span. desirable; Psychiatrist for adults/adolescents w/NYS license & BE/BC; Registered Nurse w/NYS license & min. 4 yrs. work w/psychiatric or related pop; Social Worker w/NYS CSW & min. 2 yrs. exp. in outpatient psych. setting using team and/or group therapy approach, knowledge of ADL skills & support systems development; Activities Therapist w/ MA/MS Recreation, Art, Music or Dance therapy, Lic/Reg in particular field; min. 2 yrs. work in psych. setting, min. 2 yrs. activity skills, knowledge of ADL skills development; Occupational Therapist w/MA/MS from accredited program & NYS Lic./Reg., min. 2 yrs. exp., preferably in psych. setting; knowledge of ADL skills development; Substance Abuse Counselor w/ NYS CASAC or equivalent, BA/BS pref., min. 2 yrs. employment exp. w/ substance abuse/MICA pop. Some of the above positions may require Sat. hrs. Please fax or send resume to Dept. of Human Resources, **Fordham-Tremont CMHC**, 2021 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10453 or fax to (718) 583-6610. ©

Upcoming Events

March 23	Membership meeting at CVMHA
March 24	PLC*: Time Effective Treatment for Children, Adolescents and Families at CSS
March 27	MICA Committee at The Bridge
March 30	TOP Instrument Training at FPWA
March 31	Medical Manager software demonstration at FPWA
April 2, 3, 4	<i>Mastering the Key Connection</i> at Crowne Plaza
April 4	PLC*: Patients' Bill of Rights at CSS <i>Creating a Mental Health Easy Pass for the Child Welfare system</i> at Fordham Law School <i>Facing New Trends and Treatment Challenges for the year 2000</i> at Lincoln Medical Center
April 5	Community Environmental Center presentation on building insulation at PRFI
April 7	Anasazi software demonstration at CVMHA
April 12	PLC*: Open Minds presentation on case rates at FPWA
April 13	Finance Committee at CVMHA Executive Committee at CVMHA
June 15	Mental Health Awards at Pfizer

*PLC = Professional Learning Center