



# Coalition Briefs

## FLASH

**BREAKING NEWS ABOUT COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN NEW YORK**

## **Reinvestment II vetoed by Gov. on constitutional grounds!** *Promises new Reinvestment bill in January*

Late Friday, Governor Pataki issued a stunning veto of legislation known as Reinvestment II. This bill would put into the community mental health sector savings realized from the elimination of state psychiatric hospital beds. Describing himself as, “committed to the principle of community re-investment” Governor Pataki objected to the bill on the grounds that, coming as it does from the legislature, it unconstitutionally dictates an item in the Executive budget proposal.

Originally passed by both houses of the legislature in May 2002, the Republican-controlled Senate had held on to Reinvestment II until early this month in an effort to deliver it to the Governor at a strategic time. We had assumed that the bill had been crafted in such a way as to be amenable to the Governor’s wishes.

In the disapproval letter which was delivered to the Senate this morning, Governor Pataki highlights his administration’s record of making, “historic investments” in the mental health sector which have made available “a comprehensive array of services and a qualified workforce.” The governor’s veto comes on the heels of the December 1 implementation of a cost of living adjustment and Medicaid fee increase for mental health services.

Governor Pataki promised to reintroduce a Community Mental Health Reinvestment Program in his 2003-04 Executive budget submission. The budget proposal is expected shortly after his State of the State address in early January. ▣