



# Briefs Coalition

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

## Highlights of the Governor's SFY 2006-2007 Budget

Governor Pataki released his final budget on January 17th, and we're happy to report that it contains some very positive components for the community mental health sector. What follows is a thumbnail glimpse of the Governor's proposal.

### **\$30.9 Million -- Three Year CPI-indexed COLA for nearly all non-trended residential and non-residential State and Medicaid-funded mental health programs**

The full annual value of this year's 2.5% COLA will be \$30.9 million in all funds. There will be separate calculations tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in each of the next two years. When one adds the full value of the COLA over three years, it is likely that the total value will exceed \$90 million in all funds.

With the exceptions of clinics, day treatment and continuing day treatment, virtually every other OMH funded program, whether it receives State Aid or Medicaid reimbursement, will be in line for a COLA. Case management, ACT, supported housing, outreach...the list includes some 70 programs eligible for the COLA. Notably, the COLA will also apply to supplemental rates (COPS, CSP, DSH and non-COPS supplements) that some programs, including clinics, CDTP's, etc. receive.

The Coalition has long argued that the funding for many OMH-funded programs and services is stagnant while provider's expenses steadily increase each year. We are delighted that Commissioner Carpinello and the Governor took steps to address this systemic problem in this year's budget.

### **\$62 Million – Children's Mental Health Initiative**

This initiative represents "the single largest one-year investment in children's

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## Koppell to Chair City Council's Mental Health Committee

The New York City Council appointed Council Member G. Oliver Koppell (D-Bronx) as the new chair of the Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse & Disability Services Committee. Koppell was elected to the Council in 2001 after over thirty years of public service as a State Assembly member, State Attorney General, and President of School Board District 10. The Coalition spoke briefly with Council Member Koppell shortly after his appointment, and will meet with him more formally next week to discuss our agenda.

The members of the Mental Health Committee are Council Members Gale Brewer, Simcha Felder, James Gennaro and Annabel Palma. Councilmember Palma (D-Bronx) will also head a Drug Abuse subcommittee of the Mental Health Committee. The City Council's Health Committee will be chaired by Joel Rivera (D-Bronx).

The Coalition congratulates Council Members Koppell, Palma and Rivera on their committee assignments. We look forward to working with the Chairs, as well as with Speaker Quinn and the full City Council, on issues of importance to the community mental health sector. As always, we will keep you apprised of our work with the New York City Council.

## Medicare Part D Update

On January 24th, the New York State Senate passed a bill which would protect those dual eligibles unable to get their prescriptions filled due to start up problems with Medicare Part D. New York State Medicaid would pay for prescriptions for dual eligibles until the Commissioner of Health declares that the operational problems associated with the implementation of Part D have been resolved. The bill has passed both the Senate and Assembly and now awaits the Governor's signature.

If passed, the bill would benefit from a recent decision by The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to fully reimburse all states which have provided emergency prescription drug coverage for dual eligibles during the implementation phase of Part D. The reimbursement program remains in effect until February 15th, with the possibility of a short-term extension.

## DOHMH Seeks Intergovernmental Affairs Liaison

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is seeking a new Associate Staff Analyst in the Bureau of Intergovernmental Affairs. DOHMH wishes to fill the vacancy with someone who has broad knowledge of behavioral health issues. If you know of anyone who might be interested, or would like to receive more information, please contact Meggan Christman of DOHMH at 212-788-4295 or mchristm@health.nyc.gov.

# Coalition Briefs



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mental health in New York State's history". There are many components, which we will list below.

### **\$33 Million in all funds – "Child and Family Clinic Plus" initiative.**

While doubling the number of current admissions to clinic treatment for children and adolescents, this significant initiative will also redesign children's clinics to be more proactive in reaching out to young people in need through "outreach, community-based assessments, evidence-based treatments and in-home services and supports."

### **\$21.5 Million in all funds – Expansion of Home and Community Based Waivers.**

This funding will provide 300 new HCBW slots. In addition, the State's Office of Children and Family Services will provide 150 new slots. Taken together, this funding will double the number of slots available for children at risk.

### **\$450,000 -- "Expansion of Rural Telepsychiatry to Provide Children and Families Living in Rural Settings with Greater Access to Child Psychiatrists".**

For children in more remote areas of the State, this initiative will "support a child psychiatrist who will be available to provide the designated sites with up to 600 comprehensive evaluations/consultations each year."

**\$620,000 to provide Evidence-Based Practice competence** to 400 clinicians who work with young people, leading to more in-depth clinic treatment for up to 20,000 children and adolescents.

**\$6.3 Million in all funds – 2.5% COLA.** As explained above, the Governor's budget includes a three-year COLA, tied to the CPI, which will be applicable to children's community-based mental health programs as well.

### **\$6.5 Million – Rate Increase for OMH Supported Housing**

Once again, OMH included a rate increase for the Supported Housing program. Over the past two years,

these rate increases total \$13 million. And, as mentioned above, this program is eligible for a 2.5% COLA for each of the next three years.

What does this mean? The COLA will apply to the "new" rate which will be a combination of the original rate of two years ago PLUS last year's rate increase PLUS this year's rate increase. This appears to be very, very good news.

No details have been given as to how this year's rate increase will be distributed across the State. Last year, the rate increase went to those counties identified as being most in need (i.e., the largest gap between the OMH rate and actual provider expenses), which included NYC.

**Medicare Part D Update** – For dual eligibles, Governor Pataki has allocated \$200 million to support "a six-month transition period [through July 1, 2006] during which the Medicaid program will continue to fund all medically necessary drugs in the event they are not available under Part D." He also will continue "a 'wrap-around' benefit under Medicaid for certain critical drugs used in the treatment of mental illness, HIV/AIDS and organ transplants."

The Governor allocated \$5 million for each of the next two fiscal years to assist beneficiaries who are transitioning onto the new Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. Finally, enrollment in Medicare Part D will be a requirement for the State's EPIC program.

This is our preliminary overview of the SFY 2006-2007 Executive Budget as of today. We will provide more detailed information and analysis in a forthcoming memorandum. Please be aware that there are a few other issues included in the budget proposal, including:

- \$1.9 Million for Suicide Prevention Efforts;
- \$2.0 Million to fund the 2005 Geriatric Mental Health Act;

- \$1.1 Billion over ten years to fund housing through NY/NY III
- \$26.8 Million in expense funding and \$165 Million in capital funding to "increase public safety through the civil commitment of sexually violent predators, where appropriate, to secure treatment facilities"
- \$68 Million in capital funding to rebuild the Bronx Adult and Children's Psychiatric Centers
- \$28 Million in capital funding to maintain the Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center on Ward's Island
- \$600,000 to enhance services to incarcerated individuals with mental illness

## **Governor Announces Special Elections to be Held on February 28th**

Governor George E. Pataki announced that on February 28, special elections will be held in order to fill vacancies in the New York State State Senate and Assembly. The following New York City seats are among those to be filled:

- The 59th Assembly District seat (Brooklyn), vacated by the resignation of Frank R. Seddio
- The 67th Assembly District seat (Manhattan), vacated by the resignation of Scott Stringer
- The 74th Assembly District seat (Manhattan), vacated by the resignation of Steven Sanders

## **Job Board**

Coalition Members advertise for free on The Coalition's Job Board! Non-members may advertise for only \$50. Go to [www.cvmha.org](http://www.cvmha.org) and click on 'Job Board' and then 'Add a Job.' Please note the addition of a dedicated Job Board for posting psychiatrist positions. View available positions anytime at [www.cvmha.org](http://www.cvmha.org).

# Coalition Briefs

## Coalition Calendar

### Children's Committee Meeting

**01/30/06 9:30 AM-11:00AM**

To RSVP, call Heather Rabinowicz at 212-742-1600, ext. 109.

### Medicare Part D Training for Providers and Consumer Advocates

**02/01/06 2:00 PM-4:00PM**

To RSVP, call Bill Zeiser at 212-742-1600, ext. 210.

### Co-occurring Disorder Committee Meeting

**02/03/06 3:00 PM-4:30PM**

To RSVP, call Michael Polenber at 212-742-1600, ext. 102.

### IDDT Training Session VI - Behavioral Counseling with Dr. Douglas Noordsy

**02/08/06 9:00 AM-1:00PM**

For information on the location of this training, or to register, please see The Coalition's website.

### Medicare Part D Training for Providers and Consumer Advocates

**02/10/06 10:30 AM-12:30PM**

**02/22/06 2:00 PM-4:00PM**

To RSVP, call Bill Zeiser at 212-742-1600, ext. 210.

### Monthly Membership Meeting

**02/23/06 3:30 PM - 5:30PM**

## Got a Medicare Part D Question?

Please call The Coalition's Medicare Part D Provider Helpline at **212-742-1873**. Available **Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 AM to 5 PM** to help with YOUR Medicare Part D questions!

Also available from The Coalition, **The Provider Guide to Medicare Part D**, which can be downloaded for free at [www.cvmha.org](http://www.cvmha.org).

## Oliveira Named President and CEO of New York Women's Foundation

Ana Oliveira has been appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of the New York Women's Foundation (NYWF).

Oliveira has a long history of public service in the field of health, human services and social justice, and served most recently as Executive Director of Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC).

The Coalition congratulates Ana, and we look forward to working with her in her new capacity.

## Please Report Medicare Part D Horror Stories to The Coalition

Many beneficiaries are reporting difficulties in receiving their medications under the new Medicare Part D program. Please report accounts of any difficulties your clients are encountering to The Coalition.

You may contact Bill Zeiser at [wzeiser@cvmha.org](mailto:wzeiser@cvmha.org) or Karyn Krampitz at [kkkrampitz@cvmha.org](mailto:kkkrampitz@cvmha.org).

## Coalition Heads to Albany

The Coalition and its Board of Directors will head to Albany on February 7<sup>th</sup> to meet with key legislators and staff from both sides of the aisle to discuss our mental health agenda for the new year. The Coalition will look for legislative support for the Governor's proposals that benefit workforce, children, and supported housing, and will advocate for the inclusion of other critical items in the final State budget.

## Coalition Urges Support and New Measures at State Budget Hearings

In testimony this week before the joint hearing of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways & Means Committees Executive Director Phillip Saperia testified on the Governor's proposed Executive Budget published January 17 and urged legislative action on several measures.

The Coalition strongly supported the proposed three-year COLA, noting that in stretching it out over three years, the Governor was acknowledging the need for a rate that reflects the upward pressures of inflation. We expressed our hope that a structural solution could be found for this vexing long term problem for providers.

Praising the Governor and Commissioner Carpinello for their historic comprehensive children's mental health initiative, Saperia noted that it represents a concerted effort by the State and SOMH to rectify the chronic under-funding of mental health services for children, adolescents and their families and to deliver those services in traditional and non-traditional settings.

The Coalition joined advocates in urging support for the \$6.5 million Supported Housing rate increase, providing much needed relief for the second year in a row.

In addition to strongly supporting the above measures, The Coalition urged the legislature to push for the extension beyond six months of the State's Medicaid prescription drug coverage for dual eligibles and for the coverage of their medication co-pays under Medicare Part D. We also asked for restoration of last year's \$3.9 million cut to community mental health programs (\$2 million of which will affect New York City providers) and for a modest \$500,000 initiative that would add dual disorder competence to Blended Case Management teams.

Legislators were probing but civil in their questions to Commissioner Carpinello. There seemed to be agreement that the Governor's budget proposals were a very welcome beginning to the FY 2007 budget debate.