



Coalition Briefs

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

Coalition & Member Agencies Testify at City Council Budget Hearing

The Coalition, joined by eleven of its member agencies, called on the City Council to restore funding to a range of mental health, mental retardation and chemical dependency programs targeted for cuts in the Mayor's Fiscal 2007 Preliminary Budget. The City Council's Mental Health Committee, chaired by Council Member Oliver Koppell (D-Bronx), also heard testimony from DOHMH Commissioner Thomas Frieden and Deputy Executive Commissioner Lloyd Sederer.

Phillip Saperia, the Coalition's Executive Director, opened the testimony by expressing his frustration with the inordinate delays in the processing of contracts at the Division of Mental Hygiene. He noted that the Coalition specifically requested a separate Agency Chief Contracting Officer for the Division since the vast majority of the contracts are on the mental hygiene side of the agency. The Administration's proposal to "shake up" the Division's contracting process by cutting \$354,000 in Fiscal 2007 (growing to \$1.4 million in Fiscal 2010) would likely make matters even worse, he noted.

Michael Polenberg, the Coalition's Director of Policy & Advocacy, followed by calling on the Council to restore funding to those programs left unprotected by the Mayor in his budget proposal, including the Coalition's own Professional Learning Center. He also advocated for an enhancement to \$2.5 million for the Council's Geriatric Mental Health Initiative to ensure that funding reaches contracted providers in high-need communities throughout the city.

The Committee heard from a diverse group of providers and consumers who spoke eloquently about the need to restore funding to key programs. The

Coalition would like to thank all of its member agencies who sent representatives to testify at the hearing. As the city budget process unfolds over the next several months, the Coalition will once again play a lead role in advocating for resources for the community mental health sector.

Legislature Proposes Additional MH Funding

The NYS Legislature is proposing to add additional mental health funding in the following areas:

- \$2 million to enhance non-Medicaid programs, including peer support, drop-in centers, and clubhouses; (Senate)
- \$1.8 million enhancement for upstate supportive housing providers; (Senate)
- \$1.5 million for family support programs; (Senate)
- \$1.5 million for additional case management and peer specialists for adult home residents; (Senate)
- \$600,000 to restore cuts to hospital-based mental health providers; (Senate)
- \$75,000 for OMH to investigate disparities in clinic rates, and \$3.3 million to bring "equity" to those clinic providers with lower funding rates; (Senate)
- \$4.3 million to restore Aid to Locality cuts enacted in the Fiscal 2004-2005 budget — \$3.5 million would be directed to adult programs, and \$900,000 would be for children's programs; (Assembly)
- \$750,000 to fund 50 scattered site supportive housing units for adult home residents; (Assembly)
- \$2 million dollars to add air conditioning to adult homes (Assembly)



On March 2, NYS OMH Commissioner Sharon Carpinello and child bureau head David Woodlock, provided detail on the proposed \$62 million children's mental health initiative to The Coalition's membership. Pictured from left to right: Evelyn Blanck of the Manhattan Ctr. for Early Learning, Commissioner Carpinello and Neil Pessin of Visiting Nurse Service of NY.

October Start Date Planned for Governor's Proposed Mental Health COLA

The State Office of Mental Health is reporting that the proposed 2.5% COLA for most outpatient community mental health programs will not go into effect until October 1, 2006 for the fiscal year that begins April 1. In the second and third year of the proposal, the rates will be put into effect on April 1 of the respective year.

The proposed COLA is expected to bring in approximately \$30 million a year to the sector. The language in the Governor's proposal extends the COLA to both PS and OTPS costs borne by providers.

Most Albany insiders predict an on-time budget this year, since the entire legislature is up for re-election, and there will be a Governor's race this fall.

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The Coalition Web Site: Your one-stop shop for mental health news, advocacy and information. Visit today!
www.cvmha.org

The Essential Guide to Billing Medicaid: A Three Part Training Series NOW Available on DVD and VHS

In light of recent OIG audits focusing on behavioral health services as well as federal initiatives to cut Medicaid spending, providers need to learn how to minimize risks. The novice biller and expert alike will find our popular three part series on Medicaid Billing to be helpful and enlightening. The series was taped during live presentations by Derek Jansen, Ph.D., and covers such pertinent billing topics as regulatory compliance, proper coding and documentation procedures, and compliance plans. For more information and an order form, please visit our website at www.cvmha.org.

Advancing Public Mental Health into the Mainstream of the Public Health

On April 10, 2006, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, in conjunction with Hunter College will be holding an all day conference designed to introduce clinicians, academics, students and policy makers to the evidence base which supports the incorporation of mental health into the public health agenda. For more information, or to RSVP, please contact Ms. Chaquon Polanco of the Hunter School of the Health Professions at 212-481-4313, or e-mail chicks@hunter.cuny.edu. RSVPs must be received by April 3.

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 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.

Friar to Leave SHNNY

Effective June 30, Maureen Friar will resign as Executive Director of the Supportive Housing Network of New York after thirteen years of dedicated service. She plans to pursue other professional opportunities. The Coalition wishes Maureen the best of luck. Candidates interested in the Executive Director position at SHNNY may forward their resume and a cover letter with salary requirements to: SHNNY Search Committee c/o Jennifer Mpofu, Richman Housing Resources LLC, 1010 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 301, New York, NY 10018 or via email at mpofuj@richmanhousing.com.

Upcoming Trainings From The Coalition's Center for Rehab and Recovery

Basic Benefits Training- This free training is intended for staff working in outpatient settings.

March 23rd- Venture House

April 4th- Postgraduate Ctr. for MH

April 20th- Howie T. Harp

Comprehensive Benefits Training- will be held at the Center on April 17th-19th for benefits counseling staff who want to learn more, including the latest updates.

"Opening the Door to Recovery", the Center's training series designed to build the core competencies of front-line staff and supervisors will continue on April 25th and 26th with "Integration of Clinical, Rehabilitation and Employment Services". On May 23rd and 24th "Best Practices in Employment" will review the essential elements of effective employment services.

For more information about seminars, or to register, please visit: www.cvmha.org/ccrr/seminars/corecompetenciestraining.html or call 212-742-1600 x 235.

DMH Appoints New Senior Director of Contracts

Tamara Hubinsky has been named Senior Director of Contracts at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Division of Mental Hygiene. In this role, she reports directly to Executive Deputy Commissioner Dr. Lloyd Sederer. Ms. Hubinsky has previously been the Director of Central Functions in the DMH Bureau of Program Services. The Coalition looks forward to working with Ms. Hubinsky in improving the Division's contracting process.

Coalition Calendar

Monthly Membership Meeting
03/23/06 3:30 PM - 5:30PM

Medicare Part D Training: Exceptions and Appeals
03/29/06 2:00 PM-4:00PM

This workshop is crucial to any provider who wants to ensure their clients experience no interruption in prescription benefits. To RSVP, call Bill Zeiser at 212-742-1600, ext. 210.

IDDT Training Session VIII - Co-Occurring Substance Use and Psychiatric Disorders

04/21/06 1:00 PM-5:00PM
For information on the location of this training, or to register, please visit www.cvmha.org.

Angott Named Assistant Commissioner at DOHMH

Margo Angott has been named Assistant Commissioner for Early Intervention Programs at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Prior to her appointment at DOHMH, Ms. Angott was at Columbia University where she served as Assistant Vice President for Health Services. The Coalition welcomes Ms. Angott and looks forward to working with her.