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Protect the Infrastructure for Community-Based Behavioral Health Services

- **Restore cuts to Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Support Services Program**
Governor Paterson has proposed a 13% cut to the State's share of SRO Support Services, which could result in the virtual elimination of the program. The Coalition seeks full restoration of SRO Support Services funding. (Restore \$2.7 million)
- **Stop erosion of supported housing services by ensuring rent & capital pass-through**
Payments to providers for supported housing services have not kept pace with rising rent, property and maintenance costs. Funding is needed to ensure that service dollars intended to provide supports to consumers are not used to pay for rising rent and capital expenses.
- **Invest in mandated Information Technology (IT) upgrades**
The Coalition seeks supplemental IT investment funding for the community-based behavioral health sector. Not-for-profit behavioral health providers are mandated to meet new requirements, much like primary care practitioners, but are not eligible to drawdown the public funding enhancements that primary care practitioners are entitled to access.
(Appropriate \$20 million for property cost catch-up and infrastructure investment)

The Local Impact

- The proposed cut to SRO Support Services will prevent Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) from funding 13,328 existing units statewide and 9,624 existing units in New York City alone. In the City, thirty-eight new residences would open with zero SRO Support Services funding, placing 1,943 formerly homeless, disabled tenants at risk. This cut will also result in the elimination of an estimated 863 jobs (case management staff and front desk support) and the potential loss of 106 new jobs.
- Each year the cost of rent, land, materials and maintenance goes up, while the operating rates paid to providers for client services remains stagnant. As a result, providers have no option but to designate funding intended for supported services to meet the costs of capital and building maintenance.
- In addition, behavioral health providers are mandated to cover the costs of computer technology upgrades and electronic health records without subsidies available to other health sectors and absent additional funding allocations.

Why this is Important

Supported housing models provide cost-effective homes for poor and disabled New Yorkers who have no other alternatives. They are far less costly than hospital beds, emergency rooms and prison cells. They prevent homelessness and help residents bring stability to their lives.

IT systems are efficient and effective cost saving instruments. Increasingly, electronic health records are required by federal and State government. In many instances, the behavioral health system has been left behind when funding has been made available for infrastructure investments. For example, when the Federal stimulus bill authorized new funding for Health Information Technology (HIT) investments, money was allocated to primary care doctors, hospitals and nursing homes. Unfortunately, behavioral health organizations were not eligible to access stimulus money for IT improvements, even though they are accountable for the same financial standards and IT case tracking, reporting and billing requirements.