



The Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies, Inc.
90 Broad St.
New York, NY 10004
212.742.1600 x105
www.coalitionny.org

Reauthorize State Agency Exemption from Social Worker & Other Mental Health Professionals License Requirements

- **Extend the Exemption from professional license law to 4 years**
The Coalition unconditionally supports Article VII legislation submitted by Governor Paterson's Executive Budget to extend the sunset of the exemption of public sector practitioners at OASAS, OMH and OMRDD from the requirements of the Social Worker and Other Mental Health Professionals professional license law until June 1, 2014.
- **Extend the Exemption to other relevant State Agencies**
The Department of Health (DOH), Division of Parole and the Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) will also be impacted by the sunset of the exemption on June 30, 2010, causing significant workforce problems and access to care issues. These State Agencies should be included in the exemption.

The Local Impact

As of June 30, 2010, the current exemption will sunset and professional staff will be required to adhere to new law and regulations that will curtail the type of services provided, limit access for consumers and disrupt an already established and acceptable billing practice. Employees of Article 31 clinics operate in environments that not only provide direct supervision but are closely audited and regulated by a variety of State agencies, i.e. OMH, OASAS, OMIG, etc. and professional organizations such as CARF or The Joint Commission. The sunset of the exemption will place great stress on a system that is already resource deprived, causing numerous workforce issues:

- Agencies will not have the capacity to employ social workers and therapists, or afford adequate coverage under the law's supervisory requirements
- Clinics will be forced to cut back on services, and in some cases close completely
- Many social workers and other professionals plan to retire during the next few years, creating huge professional workforce gaps

Why this is Important

On September 1, 2004, a law went into effect permitting a time period for certified social workers to become Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LMSW) or Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW). The window closed before all eligible social workers could become licensed. If the sunset provision is extended for an additional four years, it will allow The Coalition and a statewide alliance of professional and advocacy organizations time to work with the legislature, the Executive and with key state agencies to fix a number of regulatory issues that have prevented the workforce from becoming properly licensed, guaranteeing that the behavioral health social safety net will remain intact.