

THE COALITION

OF BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH
AGENCIES, INC.

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January 13, 2009

Governor David A. Paterson
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson,

The Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies strongly opposes the proposed cut to the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) state supplement contained in the Governor's Executive Budget for 2009-2010 and urges you to restore this cut.

The proposed budget does not preserve the safety net for SSI beneficiaries. Although there has been no increase in the state supplement for 20 years, the state proposes to make drastic cuts to the SSI state supplement in order to save \$84 million in 2009-10 and \$79 million in 2010-2011. Specifically, the proposed budget includes cuts of over 25% for individuals and couples living alone in the community and 45-70% for those living with others. All of these individuals live on very low incomes and meager resources. The proposed cuts are outlined below.

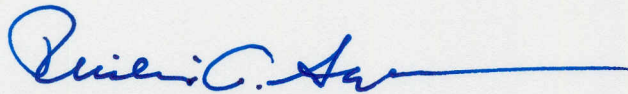
Category	State Supplements		
	Current – 5/31/09	6/1/2009 – 12/31/2009	Effective 1/1/2010
Individuals living in the community	\$87	\$63	\$70
Couples living in the community	\$104	\$77	\$85
Individuals living with others	\$23	\$7	\$12
Couples living with others	\$46	\$25	\$32

While there may be an increase in the Federal supplement, the increase does not offset the proposed cut in state aid and further the income of all of the recipients is so low, any cut is devastating. During these hard economic times, it is unconscionable to cut the SSI state supplement which is vital to the health, both physical and emotional, and well-being of its recipients.

Of the 600,000 New Yorkers who receive SSI, most spend their money to pay rent and utilities, buy food, clothing and other necessities. Furthermore, the SSI state supplement helps individual's pay for their high medical costs, including deductibles and co-payments. Without this supplemental income, individuals will have to make life changing decisions; to pay their rent or become homeless, to pay for their preventive doctor visits or end up in the emergency room.

We respectfully ask you to restore the cut to the SSI state supplement.

Sincerely,



Phillip A. Saperia
Executive Director

cc: Deborah Bachrach, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Health
Joe Baker, Deputy Secretary for Health and Human Services
Michael J. Burgess, Director, Office for the Aging
Karen M. Carpenter- Palumbo, Commissioner, Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
Richard Daines, Commissioner, Department of Health
David A. Hansell, Commissioner, Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance
Michael Hogan, Commissioner, Office of Mental Health
Shirley Huntley, Chair, Committee on Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities, NYS Senate
Diana J. Ritter, Commissioner, Office of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities
Peter Rivera, Chair, Mental Health Committee, NYS Assembly
Michael Seereiter, Program Director for Mental Hygiene Services, Governor's Office