



Coalition Briefs

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BREAKING NEWS ABOUT COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN NEW YORK

Mayor releases FY2000 budget - DMHMRAS funding suffers no major cuts

Mayor Giuliani unveiled his fiscal year 2000 budget today for the City of New York. Approximately 5% of the \$35.3 billion budget proposal is earmarked for health and mental health related expenditures. The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Alcoholism Services (DMHMRAS) budget totals \$268.45 million. This number is over \$141 million lower than the fiscal year 1999 forecast and \$129 million lower than the 2000 Preliminary Budget. This substantial reduction is in large part a result of the fact that the Early Intervention Program has been moved to the Department of Health.

Ninety-four percent of the Department's budget funds programs provided by the voluntary sector and the Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC). The distribution of funds among program areas is 51% for mental health, 18% for mental retardation and developmental disabilities, and 18% for alcoholism services. The remainder goes to prison mental health, family court, criminal court and administration.

The only new programming added to the fiscal year 1999 budget adopted with the City Council are as follows:

- \$5 million for an intensive methadone to abstinence program operated by HHC for 2,100 clients who currently receive methadone maintenance services at five HHC facilities.
- \$500,000 to cover operating expenses at the 500 City Capital units built under the second New York/New York Agreement. This money will begin in 2001.

Further details will emerge as we are able to take more time to analyze the budget and any implications it may have. We will keep you informed as we learn more. ▣

Mayor and Governor reach a Second New York/New York Agreement

The stalemate is broken and the executives of the City and the State have agreed on a second New York/New York Agreement to house the homeless mentally ill. The five-year agreement requires the City and State together to spend over \$100 million to create 1,500 units of supportive housing for people who are homeless and mentally ill.

The City and State will each build 500 capital units. New York City will contribute an additional 310 scatter site units, funded with State aid, primarily Reinvestment money. The State will add 190 scatter site residences.

The agreement will largely be funded with monies allocated last year. The Mayor earmarked \$51 million in fiscal year 1999 and asked the Governor for \$100 million to continue the 2/3 State-1/3 City funding structure that was implemented under the first agreement. The Governor was unwilling to allocate more than the \$45.7 million appropriated last year.

As a result of these funding shortfalls, the 10,000 units for which the Campaign for a Second New York/New York Agreement asked are not to be built in the next five years. Similarly, Mayor Giuliani's proposal for 2,500 units will also not be realized. The City and State anticipate that 2,300 people will be housed under the new agreement. There is not yet a memorandum of understanding, so it is unclear if the eligibility requirements will be opened up to include people at risk of homelessness.

While we are disappointed that the tremendous need for housing for the homeless mentally ill will not be met, we are grateful that the year-long stalemate has ended. The recognition by both the City and State that housing for the homeless mentally ill is badly needed is encouraging, and we look forward to the 475 units that the Governor's press release tells us will be available in July 2000. "It's not enough," said Mayor Giuliani, however, "It's better to take what you can get and move forward." We agree. ▣