



Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

**Testimony of Arlene González-Sánchez, MS, LMSW
NYS OASAS Commissioner**

**Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Mental Hygiene
SFY 2017-2018 Executive Budget Proposal Testimony**

**Monday, February 6, 2017, 1:00 p.m.
Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY
Hearing Room B**

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NYS OASAS Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez, MS, LMSW
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Good afternoon Senator Young, Assembly Member Farrell, Senator Amedore, Assembly Member Rosenthal, and distinguished members of the Senate and Assembly Committees. My name is Arlene González-Sánchez, and I am Commissioner of the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, or OASAS.

I want to begin by thanking you for your support of our mission at OASAS and for giving me the opportunity to present Governor Cuomo's 2017-2018 Executive Budget as it pertains to OASAS.

As you know, OASAS oversees one of the nation's largest addiction services systems. It includes more than 1,600 programs that assist nearly 100,000 New Yorkers on any given day. In addition, more than 336,000 school-age young people receive prevention services annually.

Before I discuss the specific details of the upcoming OASAS budget, I want to highlight what we have accomplished in the past year.

In 2016, I served together with Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, as co-chair of the Governor's Heroin and Opioid Task Force. The Task Force held listening forums statewide to hear from individuals, families, providers, and community leaders, about their local needs for combatting this epidemic. With your support, Governor Cuomo signed landmark, comprehensive legislation recommended by the Task force, to end the opioid epidemic.

Our collaborative efforts have, among other things, ended prior insurance authorization, to allow for immediate access to inpatient treatment, as long as such treatment is deemed necessary by a physician. In addition, utilization review by insurers can begin only after the first 14 days of treatment, ensuring that every patient receives at least two weeks of uninterrupted care, deemed necessary by a physician.

To expand access to Naloxone (Narcan), we now require insurance companies to cover the full costs of naloxone, when prescribed to people who are addicted to opioids, as well as to their covered family members on the same insurance plan.

To reduce unnecessary access to opioids, we have limited initial opioid prescriptions for acute pain to no more than a 7-day supply, with exceptions for chronic pain and other conditions. To ensure that prescribers understand the risks presented by prescription opioids, part of their ongoing continuing medical education requirements will now include three hours, on addiction, pain management, and palliative care. And to improve

consumer awareness about opioids risks, we now require pharmacists to provide educational materials to consumers about the risk of addiction, including information about local treatment services.

With the \$25 million increase in the current year's Budget we have launched a number of new initiatives. We awarded 80 new Residential Treatment beds and 600 new Opioid Treatment Program slots. We issued procurements to fund 10 new regional Community Coalitions and Partnerships, as well as 10 new Peer Engagement Programs and 10 new Family Support Navigator Programs. We now have a total of 20 of each of these programs Statewide. Additionally, we opened seven Adolescent Clubhouses and nine Recovery Community Centers.

As you can see, we have been very busy advancing our key priorities and implementing new programs to address this crisis, but there is still much more work to be done.

The Governor's 2017-18 Executive Budget proposes \$693 million that will allow OASAS to continue to support existing prevention, treatment, and recovery services. In addition, this will allow us to expand our key initiatives, by adding eight Adolescent Clubhouses, bringing the total up to 15 statewide; adding five new Recovery Community Centers, for a total of 14 centers across the State; increasing treatment beds and opioid treatment capacity; and continuing to advance the Combat Addiction Public Awareness and Anti-Stigma Campaign.

This Budget supports OASAS' ability to respond to needs identified by our constituents throughout the State, including the opening of ten 24-7 urgent access treatment centers and the development and planning for two new recovery high schools.

The Executive Budget also includes funding to support additional gambling treatment and prevention services. These funds come from slot machine and gaming table fees charged to all new casinos operating in New York State.

So to conclude, Governor Cuomo's 2017-18 Executive Budget enables us to further reinforce our treatment system, boost our statewide prevention efforts, and strengthen our recovery programs so that all New Yorkers have access to the system of care they deserve. We look forward to your continued partnership as we advance these priorities. Thank you for your time today.