



Association for Community Living



**Joint Senate/Assembly Budget Hearing on Mental Hygiene Testimony of Sebrina Barrett
Executive Director of the Association for Community Living
February 16, 2023**

I am Sebrina Barrett, executive director of the Association for Community Living. Thank you to Senator Krueger, Assemblywoman Weinstein, and the chairs and members of the Senate and Assembly Fiscal and Mental Health committees for this opportunity to testify.

Our members provide community-based mental health housing for more than 40,000 New Yorkers with severe mental illness, who are working toward recovery and independence.

Housing providers are persevering through many ongoing challenges — such as crippling inflation, sustained workforce shortages and serving aging residents who are experiencing significant medical concerns—even though their resources to do so are shrinking.

And yet, they have HOPE, because of Governor Hochul. Over the past several months, Governor Hochul has not only elevated the importance of mental health through her words, she has ensured, through her actions, that mental health services and support are a priority in New York State. This is remarkable because, for years, the needs of those with mental illness have not only been ignored, they have been left behind.

Governor Hochul inherited a mental health housing system that boasts an exceptional mission powered by exceptional staff, BUT that system is on life support because, for so long, it has received inadequate resources.

Today, though, we are optimistic because we believe we have a partner in our Governor, who understands the importance of our work and the challenges we face.

We support her plan to develop 3500 new housing units, across the continuum of care. We also support OMH's management of the development funds; OMH has the expertise and network of statewide housing providers who can help ensure these funds are used where the need is greatest. OMH has already begun to engage stakeholders, and we look forward to continued dialogue.

But equally important: Governor Hochul has followed through on her promise to include \$39 Million for rate increases for existing homes. This is crucial because even while we are developing NEW beds, we can't risk losing the homes currently in operation. And this risk is real — we face an average 25% staff vacancy rate due to an inability to pay a living wage, leading to severe workforce shortages. We face enormous rising costs for operating expenses such as fuel, food, and insurance. And the people who depend on us require a higher level of care because they are experiencing more complex concerns due to multiple co-occurring mental and physical conditions.

This is our reality. We face a \$96 million shortfall, the amount needed just to level-set us to where we were years ago. I cannot emphasize enough that this budget will help, and we are thankful. The 2.5% COLA included in the Executive Budget will help, but due to decades of neglect and massive inflation, we need more. The annual measure used to calculate the COLA, the CPI, was at 8.5% in 2022. Our providers feel the same strain on their budgets as every New Yorker feels, when sitting at the kitchen table, trying to figure out how to stretch their

dollars; how to do more with less. But we've been playing the "do more with less" game for so long, we are running out of options and waitlists continue to grow.

For these reasons, we ask that you build on the Governor's funding plan which includes the \$39 million for our rate increase so that we can absorb rising operation costs and pay our employees that work so hard caring for some of the State's most vulnerable. In addition, we support our colleagues in the behavioral health system who are calling for an 8.5% COLA.

Finally, many of our residents are aging in place—more than 40% of our residents are age 55 and over, and they are experiencing a total of 166 different medical conditions. The highest reported include: hypertension, diabetes, COPD, heart disease, arthritis, cancer and dementia. For most of these individuals, transition to assisted living or a nursing home isn't an option — nursing homes won't admit residents with a severe mental illness, and even if they would, they aren't able to address ongoing mental health and substance use disorder needs of the population served.

As the aging population in mental health community-based housing continues to grow, we must equip agencies with the resources needed to care for the residents they have been serving for decades. More than 75% of the housing providers who responded to our survey stated that they are not equipped to assist their residents with their aging medical concerns. They need nursing staff, on-site health aids, ADA compliant space to assist with mobility, additional staff training and better pay for staff.

Last year, the Legislature passed a bill to create a commission that would study how we can serve residents who are aging in place; however, that bill was vetoed because it was acted on by the Legislature outside the budget process. This year, we ask that you include the creation of a task force on aging in place in the budget, so that we eliminate that barrier, and can convene a group of those with expertise in housing, aging and mental illness to develop solutions to address this pressing challenge. The number of residents with medical challenges in mental health housing is growing, and we can no longer delay the action needed to ensure they can age with grace and comfort in their homes for as long as possible.

Thank you.



OMH Funded Supported Housing – 2023 Adequate Rate One Bedroom Apartment

The following explains the accompanying chart
It computes an adequate SH rate in each county

This chart was first created in 2002. It has been updated each year to reflect changes in HUD FMR, SSI rates, OMH increases/decreases and policy that effect funding, e.g. caseloads.

- A. **RENT:** Based on HUD Fiscal-Year 2023 Fair Year Market Rents for a **One Bedroom apartment**
- B. **RENT PAID BY RESIDENTS:** Residents pay 30% of income, typically the 2023 SSI living alone rate of \$1001/month, which is \$300.30 per month or \$3603 per year.
- C. **TOTAL PROPERTY COST TO AGENCY:** Column A minus column B.
- D. **OTHER THAN PERSONAL SERVICES (OTPS):** \$2,000 per SH slot - Based upon a realistic estimate of costs that includes travel, insurance, office supplies, telephone, computers, office rent, etc.
- E. **CASE MANAGER:** \$45,500 = \$35,000 salary plus \$10,500 for fringe benefits (30%) for a case manager With a caseload of 20. A 15% differential is included for downstate counties: \$52,325 = \$40,250 salary plus \$12,075 for fringe benefits (30%)
- F. **SUPERVISOR:** \$53,6900 = \$45,000 salary plus \$13,500 for fringe benefits (30%) for a supervisor with a caseload of 100 consumers or 5 case managers. A 15% differential is added for downstate counties: \$67,275 = \$51,750 salary plus \$15,525 for fringe benefits (30%)
- G. **ADMINISTRATION and OVERHEAD (A&OH);** at 15% on columns D through F.
- H. **ADEQUATE SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE:** Total of cost columns C-G.
- I. **CURRENT SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE:** This is the rate SOMH pays by county for each supported housing unit in each county as of January 1, 2023.
- J. **SHORTFALL:** This number is the difference between column H and column I per bed.
- K. **NUMBER OF SH BEDS:** The actual number of beds in each county. This number is from the OMH Residential Program Indicators Report issued on September 30, 2022 .
- L. **TOTAL COUNTY SHORTFALL:** The shortfall per bed (Column J) multiplied by the number of beds in the county (Column K) equals the actual shortfall in dollars specific to each county.

	HUD FAIR MARKET RENT	RENT PAID BY RESIDENTS	TOTAL PROPERTY COST TO AGENCY	O.T.P.S.	HOUSING DIRECT CARE STAFF	SUPERVISOR	A&OH at 15%	ADEQUATE SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE PER BED/YEAR	CURRENT SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE	SHORTFALL PER BED PER YEAR	NUMBER OF S.H. BEDS	TOTAL COUNTY SHORTFALL
	A	- B	= C	+ D	+ E	+ F	+ G	= H	- I	= J	x K	= L
ALBANY	12948	3603	9345	2,000	2275	585	729	14,934	12707	2,227	287	639,149
ALLEGANY	8028	3603	4425	2,000	2275	585	729	10,014	9402	612	29	17,748
BRONX	26,040	3603	22437	2,000	2616	673	793	28,519	24621	3,898	2386	9,301,463
BROOME	9096	3603	5493	2,000	2275	585	729	11,082	9468	1,614	268	432,552
CATTARAUGUS	7896	3603	4293	2,000	2275	585	729	9,882	9402	480	117	56,160
CAYUGA	8808	3603	5205	2,000	2275	585	729	10,794	9576	1,218	68	82,824
CHAUTAUQUA	7884	3603	4281	2,000	2275	585	729	9,870	9402	468	98	45,864
CHEMUNG	9720	3603	6117	2,000	2275	585	729	11,706	10369	1,337	150	200,550
CHENANGO	8352	3603	4749	2,000	2275	585	729	10,338	9108	1,230	53	65,190
CLINTON	9348	3603	5745	2,000	2275	585	729	11,334	9685	1,649	59	97,291
COLUMBIA	11424	3603	7821	2,000	2275	585	729	13,410	11772	1,638	47	76,986
CORTLAND	9360	3603	5757	2,000	2275	585	729	11,346	10129	1,217	57	69,369
DELAWARE	8676	3603	5073	2,000	2275	585	729	10,662	9264	1,398	37	51,726
DUTCHESS	14796	3603	11193	2,000	2275	585	729	16,782	14739	2,043	291	594,513
ERIE	10896	3603	7293	2,000	2275	585	729	12,882	11197	1,685	1034	1,742,290
ESSEX	9864	3603	6261	2,000	2275	585	729	11,850	10321	1,529	33	50,457
FRANKLIN	8520	3603	4917	2,000	2275	585	729	10,506	9600	906	45	40,770
FULTON	8868	3603	5265	2,000	2275	585	729	10,854	9756	1,098	37	40,626
GENESEE	9324	3603	5721	2,000	2275	585	729	11,310	9885	1,625	47	76,375
GREENE	11172	3603	7569	2,000	2275	585	729	13,158	11436	1,722	44	75,768
HAMILTON	9240	3603	5637	2,000	2275	585	729	11,226	9637	1,589	9	14,301
HERKIMER	9108	3603	5505	2,000	2275	585	729	11,094	9612	1,482	40	59,280
JEFFERSON	11136	3603	7533	2,000	2275	585	729	13,122	11573	1,549	64	99,136
KINGS	26,040	3603	22437	2,000	2616	673	793	28,519	24621	3,898	2,711	10,568,427
LEWIS	8304	3603	4701	2,000	2275	585	729	10,290	9348	942	53	49,926
LIVINGSTON	11400	3603	7797	2,000	2275	585	729	13,386	11388	1,998	30	59,940
MADISON	10764	3603	7161	2,000	2275	585	729	12,750	10648	2,102	32	67,264
MONROE	11400	3603	7797	2,000	2275	585	729	13,386	11388	1,998	613	1,224,774
MONTGOMERY	8352	3603	4749	2,000	2275	585	729	10,338	9805	533	40	21,320
NASSAU	22968	3603	19365	2,000	2616	673	793	25,447	20615	4,832	975	4,711,541
NEW YORK	26,040	3603	22437	2,000	2616	673	793	28,519	24621	3,898	1746	6,806,519
NIAGARA	10896	3603	7293	2,000	2275	585	729	12,882	11197	1,685	167	281,395
ONEIDA	9108	3603	5505	2,000	2275	585	729	11,094	9612	1,482	214	317,148
ONONDAGA	10764	3603	7161	2,000	2275	585	729	12,750	10648	2,102	350	735,700
ONTARIO	11400	3603	7797	2,000	2275	585	729	13,386	11388	1,998	77	153,846
ORANGE	14796	3603	11193	2,000	2275	585	729	16,782	14739	2,043	376	768,168
ORLEANS	11400	3603	7797	2,000	2275	585	729	13,386	11388	1,998	31	61,938
OSWEGO	10764	3603	7161	2,000	2275	585	729	12,750	10648	2,102	65	136,630
OTSEGO	9924	3603	6321	2,000	2275	585	729	11,910	10260	1,650	38	62,700
PUTNAM	26040	3603	22437	2,000	2616	673	793	28,519	23238	5,281	78	411,945
QUEENS	26040	3603	22437	2,000	2616	673	793	28,519	24621	3,898	2213	8,627,049
RENSSELAER	12948	3603	9345	2,000	2275	585	729	14,934	12707	2,227	135	300,845
RICHMOND	26040	3603	22437	2,000	2616	673	793	28,519	24621	3,898	1095	4,268,693
ROCKLAND	26040	3603	22437	2,000	2616	673	793	28,519	23843	4,676	212	991,386
SARATOGA	12948	3603	9345	2,000	2275	585	729	14,934	12707	2,227	57	126,939
SCHENECTADY	12948	3603	9345	2,000	2275	585	729	14,934	12707	2,227	156	347,412
SCHOHARIE	12948	3603	9345	2,000	2275	585	729	14,934	12707	2,227	39	86,853
SCHUYLER	8436	3603	4833	2,000	2275	585	729	10,422	9402	1,020	12	12,240
SENECA	8784	3603	5181	2,000	2275	585	729	10,770	9685	1,085	37	40,145
ST.LAWRENCE	8904	3603	5301	2,000	2275	585	729	10,890	9576	1,314	102	134,028
STEBEN	8568	3603	4965	2,000	2275	585	729	10,554	9402	1,152	127	146,304
SUFFOLK	22968	3603	19365	2,000	2616	673	793	25,447	20615	4,832	1533	7,407,993
SULLIVAN	10056	3603	6453	2,000	2275	585	729	12,042	10945	1,097	71	77,887
TIOGA	9096	3603	5493	2,000	2275	585	729	11,082	9469	1,613	27	43,551
TOMPKINS	15312	3603	11709	2,000	2275	585	729	17,298	13648	3,650	78	284,700
ULSTER	13860	3603	10257	2,000	2275	585	729	15,846	13629	2,217	172	381,324
WARREN	10752	3603	7149	2,000	2275	585	729	12,738	11652	1,086	57	61,902
WASHINGTON	10752	3603	7149	2,000	2275	585	729	12,738	11652	1,086	5	5,430
WAYNE	11400	3603	7797	2,000	2275	585	729	13,386	11388	1,998	80	159,840
WESTCHESTER	20028	3603	16425	2,000	2616	673	793	22,507	20146	2,361	890	2,101,802
WYOMING	7536	3603	3933	2,000	2275	585	729	9,522	9402	120	26	3,120
YATES	9084	3603	5481	2,000	2275	585	729	11,070	9685	1,385	14	19,390
											20034	65,998,002



OMH MENTAL HEALTH HOUSING:

\$96.1 Million Total for Existing Housing Rate Enhancements

LICENSED PROGRAMS:

Transitional & Long-Term Transitional Housing with Treatment and Supports

Community Residence program (CRs and TAP): Capacity 2- 24 **\$8.1 million**

- Includes licensed Community Residences and Treatment Apartments
- 8,995 residential opportunities (3,900 CR beds and 5,095 TAP beds)
- This would make up for losses of 42% due to inflation.

Licensed Community Residence-Single Room Occupancy (CR-SRO): Capacity up to 100 unit **\$9.6 million**

- 3,348 residential opportunities
 - This would bring the existing units up to the new Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) amount of \$25,000 per bed – ESSHI is developing programs that have fewer obligations, pay much higher rates and include annual contractual escalators tied to inflation.

UNLICENSED PROGRAMS:

Permanent Housing with Supports

Supportive Permanent Housing in congregate facilities – SP-SROs: Capacity up to 100 units **\$12.4 million**

- 5,862 units of housing with supports (Non-ESSH units)
- This would bring the existing units up to the ESSHI amount of \$25,000 per bed – ESSHI rates include annual contractual escalators tied to inflation. ESSHI units and SP-SRO units are virtually identical in the services provided.

Supported Housing in scattered apartments: Capacity 1- 3 **\$66 million**

- 20,034 Supported Housing units – These programs are currently funded from \$9,264 - \$24,621 depending on geographic location. This increase is based on a formula that considers the fair market rents in each county and an acceptable rate for all other expenses associated with operating the program.

OTHER PRIORITIES

DEVELOPMENT

Support the Governor's proposal to have close to \$1 Billion in OMH Funding for enhanced community services including 3,500 new units of housing over 5 years.

- This proposal provides OMH Capital funding to create an array of housing options including both licensed and unlicensed units.

AGING IN PLACE TASK FORCE

Establish an Aging on Place Taskforce to make recommendations on how best to serve individuals in Mental Health Housing who are over age 55 with co-occurring medical needs.

8.5% Cost Of Living Adjustment

Provide an 8.5% COLA to Behavioral Health Programs to offset the many years of no increases in funding.

Senate Bill S1291 (Brouk)

Establish an annual human services COLA indexed to inflation.

