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11/25/2024

Dr. Ann Marie T. Sullivan, MD
Commissioner
Office of Mental Health
44 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12229

Dear Commissioner Sullivan:

In our Manhattan Senate Districts, unhoused individuals suffering from serious mental illness are a common and tragic sight. Recent studies by the NYC Coalition for the Homeless and the Department of Housing and Urban Development found that two thirds of homeless New Yorkers have some measure of “mental health needs” and 17% have a “severe mental illness.” According to a March 2024 report by State Comptroller DiNapoli, statewide inpatient psychiatric capacity decreased by 10.5%, or 990 beds, between April 2014 and December 2023 at the same time that the mental health needs of New Yorkers have greatly increased.

Our State’s struggle to serve those with serious mental illness is an ethical failure and a risk to public safety. Given these concerns, we write to request an update regarding New York State’s FY 2024 and 2025 investments in mental health.

Over the past two legislative sessions, the Office of Mental Health (OMH) has constructively partnered with Governor Hochul and the State Legislature to improve treatment and care for those suffering from serious mental health issues. In the FY 2025 budget, the State allocated \$55 million to create 200 new inpatient psychiatric beds at state-operated psychiatric facilities. The FY 2024 budget authorized OMH to levy civil penalties of up to \$2000 per day against health facilities that have decreased the number of inpatient beds for psychiatric patients, in violation of their operating certificate. The State also allocated, inter alia:

- \$890 million in capital funds and \$120 million in operating funds to establish and operate 3,500 new residential units for individuals struggling with mental illness. This includes assets such as transitional units and supportive housing units.
- \$18 million in capital funds and \$30 million in operating funds to add 150 new inpatient beds in state-operated psychiatric hospitals.
- \$60 million in capital funds and \$121.6 million in operating funds for 12 new comprehensive psychiatric emergency programs providing hospital-level crisis care, expand Community Behavioral Health Clinics statewide, create 42 Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams, and 8 new Safe Options Support (SOS) teams – including 5 in New York City.
- \$28 million to create 50 new Critical Time Intervention teams to provide services to those with serious mental illness.

Given New York State's more than \$1 billion investment in supporting New Yorkers with mental illness, we respectfully request the following information from OMH:

1. **Residential units:**

- a. How many residential units have opened due to FY2024 allocations? How many additional units are in the construction pipeline and when are they expected to open?
- b. What types of units have opened?
- c. Where are these new units located?
- d. How many New Yorkers have received services through these units in FYs 2024 and 2025?

2. **Inpatient beds at state-operated psychiatric hospitals:**

- a. How many new inpatient beds have been added in state-operated psychiatric hospitals in FYs 2024 and 2025?
- b. Where have these beds been added?
- c. What has been the occupancy rate for these beds in FYs 2024 and 2025?

3. Inpatient psychiatric beds at Article 28 Institutions:

- a. How many institutions have received penalties under subdivision (g) of section 31.16 of the Mental Hygiene Law, as amended by the FY 2023-2024 NYS Budget?
- b. How many beds have been added as a result of these penalties in FYs 2024 and 2025?
- c. How many beds have remained closed, in violation of a facility's operating certificate, since the enactment of the FY2023-2024 State Budget?
- d. What steps is OMH taking to improve the discharge process from Article 28 institutions to ensure people with severe mental health needs are immediately connected to stable housing and health care services?

4. ACT Teams:

- a. How many new ACT teams have been added and deployed with the FY 2024 allocation?
- b. Where have these teams been added and deployed? How many individuals with serious mental illness have received services from ACT teams in FYs 2024 and 2025?
- c. How many ACT teams have been funded but are not yet operating due to staffing shortage?
- d. How many individuals stopped receiving services due to lost contact with ACT teams? How many individuals requested and received discharge, against the advice of an ACT team in FYs 2024 and 2025?
- e. How many individuals were discharged after demonstrating "an ability to function in major life roles" in FYs 2024 and 2025?

5. SOS CTI Teams:

- a. How many SOS CTI teams have been added and deployed with the FY 2024 allocation?
- b. Where have new SOS CTI teams been added and deployed with the FY 2024 allocation?

- c. How many clients received services from SOS CTI in FYs 2024 and 2025?
- d. How are SOS teams collaborating with the homeless outreach teams funded by the City of New York, the MTA and Business Improvement Districts to ensure that services can be deployed most effectively?
- e. How many SOS teams have been funded but are not yet operating due to staffing shortages?
- f. How many clients stopped receiving services due to lost contact with SOS CTI teams in FYs 2024 and 2025?
- g. How many clients received stable housing placements in FYs 2024 and 2025?
- h. How did the amount of time a client spent in jail or prison change since engagement with an SOS CTI team during FYs 2024 and 2025?

6. CTI Teams:

- a. How many CTI teams have been added and deployed with the FY 2024 allocation?
- b. How many clients received services from CTI in FYs 2024 and 2025?
- c. How many clients stopped receiving services due to lost contact with CTI teams in FYs 2024 and 2025?
- d. How many clients received stable housing placements in FYs 2024 and 2025?
- e. How many Clients reached Phase 3 of CTI and were discharged according to the advice of the CTI Team in FYs 2024 and 2025?

We appreciate your partnership and dedication to assisting New Yorkers with mental illness. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Commissioner Sullivan

OMH

November 25, 2024

Page 5

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Brad Hoylman-Sigal in black ink.

Brad Hoylman-Sigal
New York Senate-47th District

Handwritten signature of Liz Krueger in black ink.

Liz Krueger
New York Senate-28th District