

The Nassau County Coalition of Chemical Dependence Providers would like to submit the following comments to the Division of Budget:

One out of ten New Yorkers has a problem with substance abuse, alcoholism and gambling. We are treating one out of seven. Untreated addiction is related to hospital admissions, crime, homelessness, mental illness, child abuse, and unemployment. Every community in the state is affected by impaired drivers and employees. Talk to any school principal to hear of the rampant drug and alcohol use and abuse by youth. Prescription drug abuse is on the rise in all ages and other drug and alcohol use has remained steady. While the use of tobacco has decreased overall, the use among people with substance abuse disorders is 93%.

There are 110,000 New Yorkers in treatment every day.

Workforce

Immediate action is needed to compensate our workforce so that quality treatment is available to New Yorkers.

Addiction treatment is a complex medical and bio-psycho-social disease requiring well trained professional staff. Due to non-competitive salaries, the workforce is shrinking and the future of quality treatment is at risk.

The 2008-09 budget should include the third year of the 3 year COLA tied to the Consumer Price Index and elimination of budget language that would sunset the COLA.

\$20 million is needed for salary upgrades to retain and recruit staff.

\$10 million is needed to address the rising cost of health care.

Infrastructure

\$15 million dollars is needed for energy cost increases and technology upgrades.

Treatment/Prevention

\$10 million should be targeted to the underage drinking crisis. Research is clear that anyone who starts drinking before the age of 15 is 4 times more likely to develop an addiction in their lifetime.

\$ 6 million should be targeted to address the barriers of lack of transportation and affordable housing options on Long Island.

\$ 2 million is needed for adolescent treatment.

\$5 million is needed to support treatment for the uninsured and underinsured with big deductibles and limited coverage. Research is clear that the longer a person stays in treatment the more likely they will be successful. However insurance companies continue to discourage length of stay. Treatment programs are also forced to absorb the cost of treatment for large numbers of undocumented people on Long Island.

Criminal Justice

\$25 million to implement treatment and prevention to re-entry families.

\$ 5 million for treatment as an alternative to incarceration and prevention for families.

\$ 2 million for treatment of uninsured person's in the criminal justice system.

Children and Families

\$ 4 million for the treatment of adolescents and adults with co-occurring disorders are needed for additional psychiatric support services.

\$ 5 million for child welfare/chemical dependence collaboration.

Tobacco

\$ 5 million is needed to support implementation of treatment for tobacco dependence in treatment programs.

In summary, high quality Addiction Treatment and Prevention are necessary to stem the personal, social, and community devastation that results from abuse and addiction. The State of New York needs to fund services at a level that addresses the one in ten New Yorkers affected and the communities, work places, and the families that are hurt by this public health crisis.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Hincken
Secretary

Nassau Coalition of Chemical Dependence Providers