

THE LEGISLATURE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

September 8, 2020

Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Governor
Executive Chamber
NYS Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write first to thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 global pandemic. We are grateful for the dedication and sacrifice of the Executive office and all of New York State's workforce to help keep our communities safe during this unprecedented time.

Secondly, we write to express our concern regarding financial challenges facing vital human services programs, and the availability of resources from the Corona Virus Relief Fund (CRF). According to the Executive's update to the financial plan, as of July 31st \$4 billion of federal funding remains in the fund.

This funding was appropriated through the CARES Act, the largest economic relief package in American history. The CARES Act established the Corona Virus Relief Fund (CRF) designed to assist states and local governments in funding COVID-19 related expenses.

New York State received \$5.1 billion from the CRF. As of this writing, \$4 billion from the CRF remains-at the state's disposal. At the same time, many of New York State's most vital services are rapidly deteriorating. ***We urge you to consider allocating resources from the CRF to support these services. Otherwise, many of the service providers will not survive or will suffer irreparable damage, doing serious harm to the children and adults who depend on them.***

New York's childcare services have experienced 25% of its childcare programs and 70% of its school-aged childcare centers close. As a member of the Governor's Childcare Availability Task Force, stated at a press conference in July, "Pre-COVID, childcare was in a crisis situation, preventing people from going to work. We cannot re-open New York

without childcare because there is nowhere for children to go and that includes children from infants all the way up through the teenage years.”

Nonprofit organizations that are contracted by the state to provide health care, afterschool programming, senior services, housing, food delivery, and food pantries, and services for people with disabilities are being forced to cut vital programs, lay off staff and close their doors. In many cases, the funding being withheld is for contracted services that have already been provided.

The Executive Director of the Human Services Council recently noted, “When the state isn’t paying their bills, but wants providers to still do those services, that’s going to result in layoffs.”

The Coalition of Behavioral Health Analysts, fearing the collapse of community-based behavioral health services for New Yorkers with mental illnesses and substance use disorders recently stated that “withholding state funding has pushed the service delivery system to the brink of insolvency.”

Many providers of substance use disorder treatment, which historically have been underfunded, are expressing concern that any additional cuts to their budget or withholding of their funding will force them to furlough or lay off staff as well as cut vital services. At the same time, the majority of these service providers have reported an increase in demand for services as overdose rates have risen around the State during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These services, along with several others, are in danger of collapse without urgently needed assistance. These services employ and serve large numbers of New Yorkers from communities of color. These communities are disproportionately affected by the pandemic. We must not allow New York State to actively withhold financial support from them.

To facilitate a full economic recovery, these services must remain viable. Reduced childcare options means fewer parents returning to work. Reduced nonprofit services means thousands of workers out of jobs and clients with greater subsequent needs that will require more expensive services. Reduced behavioral health services means the most vulnerable New Yorkers left to fend for themselves.

Whether or not the federal government reaches an agreement on the next stimulus package, New York has a moral and fiscal obligation to pay for services that have already been provided to sustain these services during the pandemic.

We rely on these services to provide aid, care and support for the needy, as Article XVII of the New York State Constitution requires. We need to assist them as they assist all of us.

We therefore respectfully request that your administration immediately intervene to support these programs.

Sincerely,



Andrew Hevesi
Assembly Chair, Social Services



Dick Gottfried
Assembly Chair, Health



Ellen C. Jaffee
Assembly Chair, Children and Families



Harry Bronson
Assembly Chair, Aging



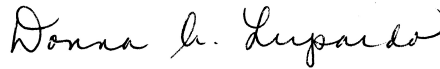
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Assembly Chair, Mental Health



Linda Rosenthal
Assembly Chair, Alcoholism
and Drug Abuse



David Carlucci
Senate Chair, Mental Health
and Developmental Disabilities



Donna Lupardo
Assembly Chair, Agriculture



Gustavo Rivera
Senate Chair, Health



Rachel May
Senate Chair, Aging



Velmanette Montgomery
Senate Chair, Children and Families



Roxanne J. Persaud
Senate Chair, Social Services

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Senator Richard Funke, 55th SD

Senator Brad Hoylman, 27th SD

Senator Todd Kaminsky, 9th SD

Senator Timothy Kennedy, 63rd SD

Senator John Liu, 11th SD

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Assemblyman Al Taylor, 71st AD

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Assembly-elect Anna Kelles
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Care for the Homeless
Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties
Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)
Coalition for the Homeless
Community Access for Social Justice (CASJ)
Crossroads Unlimited Inc.
Developmental Disabilities Alliance of
Western New York (DDAWNY)
Families for Sensible Drug Policy
Friends Shelter
Greater Syracuse Tenants Network
Hour Children
Housing Works
Hunger Free America

Inter-Agency Council of
Developmental Disability Agencies
National Harm Reduction Coalition

New York Communities for Change

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Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo, 35th CD
Councilman Ben Kallos, 5th CD
Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz, 29th CD
Councilman Alan Maisel, 45th CD
Councilwoman Carlina Rivera, 2nd CD
Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer, 26th CD
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ACR Health
Barrier Free Living Family of Companies
Catholic Family Center
Cerebral Palsy Associations of NYS
Citywide Tenant of Roc Union
Coalition for Homeless Youth (CHY)
Community Housing Innovations
Daughters of Charity in New York State
Empire State Indivisible

Fortune Society
Greater NYC for Change
Homeless Alliance of Western NY
Housing Rights Initiative
Human Services Council (HSC)
Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness
and Housing

Long Island Coalition for the Homeless
New York Alliance for Inclusion and
Innovation
New York Disability Advocates (NYDA)

NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC)
People Organized for Our Rights
Resource Center for Accessible Living

Sakhi for South Asian Women

SCO Family of Services
Southern Tier AIDS Program
Strong Economy for All
The Arab-American Family Support Center
The Coalition for Behavioral Health

The Reverend Elizabeth G. Maxwell
Church of the Ascension, NYC
United Neighborhood Houses (UNH)
Unity House of Troy

Urban Justice Center
VOCAL-NY
YWCA Binghamton and Broome

NYS Council of Churches
NYS Legal Services Coalition
Prevent Child Abuse NY
Riverside Edgecombe Neighborhood
Association
Schuyler Center for Analysis and
Advocacy
Shalom Task Force
Southern Tier Independence Center Inc.
Supportive Housing Network of NY
The Arc New York
The Mental Health Association of the
Southern Tier, Inc

Truth Pharm
Uniting Disabled Individuals
Uptown Progressive Action, a NYPAN
chapter
Village Independent Democrats
Western NY Law Center