



February 15, 2018

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Brian M. Kolb
Minority Leader of the NYS Assembly
Legislative Office Building 933
Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable John J. Flanagan
Senate Majority Leader
State Capitol Building 330
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Democratic Conference Leader
Legislative Office Building 907
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Legislative Office Building 932
Albany, NY 12248 Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable Jeffrey D. Klein
NYS Senate Coalition Leader & IDC Leader
Legislative Office Building 913
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Governor Cuomo, Senate President & Majority Leader Flanagan, Assembly Speaker Heastie, Minority Leader Kolb, and Minority Leader Stewart-Cousins:

On behalf of the organizations signed on to this letter, I want to thank you for your continued efforts to address the Opioid/Heroin battle being fought in local communities across the state. *We wholeheartedly agree that it is time for drug manufacturers to do their part to stop the Opioid/Heroin epidemic that is ravaging our state.*

We are writing to respectfully request that the OASAS prevention, treatment and recovery system be the primary beneficiary of the Opioid Surcharge funds. Our concern is that while the language in the Surcharge proposal alludes to utilization of some of the funds to stem the tide of the crisis, the proposal does not *explicitly state that OASAS will receive the majority of the Surcharge funds at a time when the OASAS service delivery system lacks the resources to address serious access to care issues resulting from ongoing workforce shortages and inadequate capacity in certain areas of the state.*

While we recognize that New York State has incurred significant expenses in areas including law enforcement, emergency response, and criminal justice, it is also true that *treatment, prevention, and recovery funding in NYS communities has barely kept pace with inflation since 2011, much less earmarked significant additional resources to address this public health disaster.* It is clear to us that without a significant infusion of resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery services along with workforce initiatives such as student loan forgiveness; scholarships for training, education, and certification; medical fellowships, and salary/hiring incentives we will not get ahead of the epidemic ravaging our communities.

Given the longstanding need for additional resources across the state we request that *85% of the funds received and deposited into the opioid prevention, treatment and recovery account be allocated to OASAS and that 50% of the total allocated to OASAS be used for new or additional opioid treatment, recovery, prevention and workforce initiatives.*

We want to reiterate that we support the Opioid Surcharge proposal for its clear message to manufacturers that they too have a responsibility to pay their fair share and for its recognition that additional funds are required to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic. But we feel strongly that the State's first priority for these funds must be the needs of the OASAS prevention, recovery and treatment system.

Thank you for considering our thoughts on this matter. We stand ready to assist you in any way possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauri Cole, Executive Director
NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

On behalf of:

FOR-NY, Stephanie Campbell, Executive Director

Families in Support of Treatment (FIST), Anthony Rizzuto, Executive Director

Coalition for Community Services, Seep Varma, Chair

Finger Lakes Consortium of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, Patrick Seche, Chair

Therapeutic Community Association of NY, Norwig DeBye-Saxinger, Executive Director

WNY Chemical Dependence Consortium, Scott Morton, Chair

Addiction Treatment Providers Association (ATPA), Avraham Schick, President

Quality Consortium of Suffolk County, Patricia Ferrandino, LCSW, CASAC, President

Legal Action Center, Paul Samuels, Director and President

The Coalition for Behavioral Health, Christy Parque, CEO

Mental Health Association of NYS, Glenn Liebman, Executive Director

NY Association for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS), Harvey Rosenthal, Executive Director

New York Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Carol Podgorski, Immediate Past President
and Public Policy Chair

NYS Care Management Coalition, Jackie Negri, Executive Director

NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health, Andrea Smyth, Executive Director

cc:

Paul Francis

Megan Baldwin

Shelly Weizman

Robert Mujica

Lou Raffaele

Frank Walsh