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**NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL APPLAUDS GOVERNOR CUOMO FOR  
ACTIONS TO PROTECT ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR ALL NEW YORKERS**

**ALBANY, NY** – The New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare thanks Governor Cuomo for his unwavering commitment to the needs of New York's adults and children with mental health and chemical dependency issues by taking actions today to ensure *all* New Yorkers continue to have access to high quality, affordable health and behavioral health care.

The Governor's actions include new health insurance regulations that push back on recent Trump Administration proposals to walk back the progress we've made as a state and as a nation ensuring access to health insurance for New Yorkers with pre-existing conditions. In addition, the Governor is promising to preserve the 10 essential health benefit categories (including mental health and substance use care) currently mandated for inclusion in most insurance policies here in New York. While the Trump Administration has proposed leaving to individual states the decision as to whether these categories of benefits will be mandatory in all health insurance packages today's announcement from the Governor leaves no doubt as to where New York stands on this issue.

"New York, and Governor Cuomo, just signaled to the nation that when our right to quality healthcare is challenged, we will not back down. New York has come so far in ensuring that our most vulnerable citizens including those with mental health and/or addictive disorders have access to life sustaining services. Health insurers must not be allowed to pick and choose our essential healthcare needs and this aggressive action by the Governor holds them accountable," said Lauri Cole, Executive Director of the NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare.

The members of the NYS Council commend the Governor for his leadership in putting the needs of New Yorkers first. By recognizing and taking action against the values of the current administration in Washington, Governor Cuomo is safeguarding basic human rights of New Yorkers. Families nationwide have been ill-served by irresponsible and inhumane decisions made by our federal government and by standing together to ensure everyone in our state remains insured, we will establish a fairer, healthier New York for generations to come.

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*The NYS Council is a statewide non-profit membership association representing the interests of 100 behavioral health (mental health and substance use) prevention, treatment and recovery organizations across New York.*