

3



Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

**Testimony of Arlene González-Sánchez, MS, LMSW
NYS OASAS Commissioner**

**Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Mental Hygiene
SFY 2016-2017 Executive Budget Proposal Testimony**

**Wednesday, February 3, 2016, 10:30 a.m.
Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY
Hearing Room B**

**Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Mental Hygiene
SFY 2016-2017 Executive Budget Proposal Testimony
NYS OASAS Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez, MS, LMSW
Wednesday, February 3, 2015, 10:30 a.m.
Hearing Room B, Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY**

Good morning Senator Young, Assembly member Farrell, Senator Amedore, Assembly member Rosenthal, and distinguished members of the Senate and Assembly Committees. My name is Arlene González-Sánchez, and I am Commissioner of the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services.

I want to begin by thanking you for your support of our mission at OASAS and for giving me the opportunity to present Governor Cuomo's 2016-2017 Executive Budget as it pertains to OASAS.

As you know, OASAS oversees one of the nation's largest addiction services systems that includes approximately 1,500 programs and assists nearly 100,000 New Yorkers on any given day.

As Commissioner of OASAS, I have the privilege of visiting and talking with New Yorkers of all ages, races and ethnicities from throughout the state about their needs when it comes to drug, alcohol and gambling prevention, treatment, and recovery services. I have heard concerns from parents, grandparents and individuals. As a mother and a fellow New Yorker, it pains me to hear stories of loss that are associated with addiction. However, every day, I am also inspired to continue our agency's important work when I hear amazing stories of hope and recovery. We are working every day to make sure that more New Yorkers have those stories - of hope and recovery - to tell.

The Governor's Executive Budget proposes \$616.9 million that will allow OASAS to move forward on our key priorities. Those priorities include: expansion of treatment beds and opioid treatment programs; as well as, expansion of prevention and recovery services; peer and family supports; housing for individuals and families; and continuing the Combat Heroin education campaign.

This proposal supports OASAS's ability to respond to needs identified by our constituents throughout the State, including expansion of treatment capacity with 24 beds for adolescent and young adults in Long Island, 24 beds for youth in Staten Island, 25 beds for youth in Niagara County, 18 beds for women in Broome County, and new detox services in the North Country.

Furthermore, the Budget includes Medicaid rate enhancements for treatment providers as they transition to Managed Care. It also includes funding for expansion of opioid treatment programs by nearly 2,000 slots from Buffalo to Watertown to Peekskill. The budget also supports the creation of an On-Call Peer support program for Emergency Departments, and development of our Family Support Navigator program.

We are also able to establish seven new Adolescent Clubhouses and six new Community-based Recovery Outreach Centers and will open 170 new NY NY III housing units.

In addition, we launched a new database on our OASAS website to assist New Yorkers with identifying available treatment beds anywhere in the state, in real time.

The budget will also allow us to create a medication assisted treatment pilot program using Vivitrol (a proven addiction medicine) together with counseling for opioid dependent parolees as they leave Edgecombe correctional facility. It will also allow the purchase of hand-held devices that can instantly analyze unknown substances for the presence of synthetics and other drugs.

We will continue our Combat Heroin public awareness campaign and the training of New Yorkers on the use of Narcan.

So to conclude, Governor Cuomo's 2016-17 Executive Budget enables us to further reinforce our treatment system, boost our statewide prevention efforts, and strengthen our recovery programs so that all New Yorkers have access to the system of care they deserve. We look forward to your continued partnership as we advance these priorities. Thank you for your time today.

