



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 2018-2019 Executive Budget Proposal Testimony**

**Tuesday, February 13, 2018, 10:30 a.m.
Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY
Hearing Room B**

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

First, thank you all for supporting our mission and providing me the opportunity to present Governor Cuomo's 2018-2019 Executive Budget as it pertains to OASAS.

Before I discuss the specific details of the upcoming Executive Budget, I want to take a moment to share with you our accomplishments to date.

We have opened new programs and expanded existing services to respond to the needs created by the opioid epidemic. We have added Treatment capacity and have launched Peer Engagement and Family Support Navigator Programs, and opened Youth Clubhouses, Recovery Centers and Addiction Resource Centers in every region of the State.

We have more than 160 prevention agencies, at least one in every county, providing education-based programming, public awareness activities, positive alternatives and counseling services. Overall, more than 60 percent of our prevention programs target elementary school children. And we recently launched a \$2.5 Million prevention initiative at 20 SUNY and CUNY colleges designed to help prevent and reduce underage drinking and drug use on college campuses.

To ensure the availability of treatment services throughout the State, we have implemented telepractice and now have more than 20 mobile treatment vehicles, providing services and transporting people to treatment programs. More are expected to come on line this year. Additionally, we have expanded our educational campaigns and created a Youth and Young Adult Statewide Recovery Network.

We've opened our first 24/7 Open Access Center, to help people access treatment on demand, by providing assessments and referrals to the appropriate level of care 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that today we will be announcing the award of more than \$4 Million, to open 10 more Open Access Centers, resulting in there being at least one in every region of the State.

So, as you can see we have been implementing the Governor's strategies for combatting the opioid epidemic and developing new programs for New Yorkers in need of our services. But we realize that much more work still needs to be done.

The Governor's 2018-2019 Executive Budget proposes nearly \$787 million that supports OASAS's ability to respond to needs identified by our constituents throughout the State, and allows us to move forward on our key priorities; including the full annual salary increases of 6.5% for direct care and support positions and 3.25% for clinical titles, as well as the increase in the minimum wage for funded OASAS providers.

We will open 203 new residential treatment beds and 350 Opioid Treatment Program slots. In addition, we are continuing a scholarship program to support 250 new candidates to become Certified Recovery Peer Advocates. And in the coming weeks, we will announce the award of \$10 million in capital funding to develop new detox beds throughout the State.

The Executive Budget allows us to develop seven regional Problem Gambling Resource Centers and gives us the flexibility to expand evidence-based prevention models in schools that teach children self-regulation and positive decision-making, focusing on school engagement and achievement as protective factors.

The Budget also includes funding to support on-site, peer-delivered substance use disorder treatment services in eight homeless shelters in New York City and 14 shelters in the rest of the State, reaching a total of 22 shelters Statewide.

There is a proposed surcharge on opioid prescriptions, to be assessed at two cents per morphine milligram equivalent. These funds will be used to support opioid prevention, treatment and recovery efforts. Opioids purchased by OASAS programs to treat addiction, like methadone and buprenorphine, will be exempt from the surcharge.

So, to conclude, the 2018-2019 Executive Budget Proposal includes funding to support OASAS's continued work to develop innovative new services and advance key initiatives, to confront the opioid epidemic. We look forward to your continued partnership as we advance these priorities.

Thank you for your time today.