

New York Public Welfare Association

NYPWA Statement on the Executive Budget for SFY 2020-21 for the Joint Legislative Budget Committee on Human Services

Sheila Harrigan, Executive Director

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The New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA) represents all fifty-eight local departments of social services statewide. Our members are dedicated to improving the quality and effectiveness of social welfare policy so that it is accountable to taxpayers and protective of vulnerable people.

The Executive Budget proposal shifts costs to counties—jeopardizing local investments in human services for children and families and other vital programs.

We urge the State Legislature and Governor to preserve the zero percent Medicaid growth cap for all counties and NYC. Local departments of social services have been active partners with the

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State during the evolution of the State's takeover of Medicaid Administration, which was scheduled to be completed by April 1, 2018. We have a shared interest in both controlling rising Medicaid costs and in serving our communities. The Medicaid rolls have risen because people are eligible based on the criteria

established by our Federal and State government. New York State determines which optional Medicaid services are covered and sets the rates for payment to medical providers and facilities. In addition, the county local share of Medicaid remains the highest in the nation.

Local investments in human services for children and families and other vital programs will be jeopardized if additional Medicaid costs are shifted to counties. Local departments of social services are mandated by State law to make accurate and timely eligibility determinations for Medicaid, including Long Term Care, in compliance with policies set by the State. The State and Federal government set strict rules that localities must follow to determine financial eligibility for Medicaid and to authorize level of care. There is no flexibility for local districts to take any action other than to implement the policies dictated by the State. It is the State that has the sole authority to monitor costs and to determine effectiveness and efficiency.

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Oppose \$25 Million Cut to Human Services

The Executive Budget proposal also reduces state funding by \$25 million by forcing counties to use the TANF Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS), instead of the open-ending funding stream, for child welfare services. This is a direct hit to all other human services supported by FFFS—such as employment programs that help families in need of assistance. We oppose raising the child welfare threshold in FFFS by \$40 million which enables this budget cut.

Ensure Flexibility in Setting State Policies for Family First Act (ELFA part M)

The NYPWA supports the intent of the federal law to promote Family First principles and family-based care. As always, there are multiple ways for how any state can meet the Federal intent. In reviewing the budget language, we ask that the Legislature ensure sure that restrictions are not enacted that will limit our ability to provide children with the services that they need.

Oppose Increased NYC Family Assistance Local Share

The NYPWA opposes the Executive Budget proposal which would establish a 15 percent local share for New York City for the Family Assistance (FA) program—a 5 percent increase over last year's enacted 10 percent NYC FA local share.

In closing, we wish to thank the NYS Assembly Ways and Means and NYS Senate Finance Committees for your leadership in bringing attention to the challenging fiscal and policy issues affecting social services.

For additional information, contact:

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