

Good morning, all.

My name is Alex Baer, and I am a supervisor of a small team of Health Home care managers in Rochester. I am excited for this session for its potential to use the pressure of a supermajority to pass truly progressive and transformative legislation to help all New Yorkers.

Senator Brouk, your own work this week in holding RPD accountable for their treatment of our city's youth is laudable, and I appreciate it.

I write to you today to discuss the frantic sprint we have as we near the end of budgeting season, and the hearings which affect behavioral health in our state.

- Immediately (today) – I urge you to speak well, and speak strongly to the need to allow pre-licensed practitioners to continue to practice. We are already facing a shortage of certified teachers – let's not stanch the growth of clinical staff, too
- Tomorrow, Friday the Fifth – Understand that despite Mujica and Cuomo's comments, this is **not** the time for austerity. Investment in behavioral health (across OMH and OASAS) absolutely must continue to be provided, especially through our Community Mental Health Reinvestment and providing local assistance to providers.
  - Any and all planned cuts or rate freezes for Medicaid and CHP must **stop**. Candidly, we and several other provider agencies in our area are struggling as it is to keep the lights on with current rates for SED and HCBS youth.
  - Given our great school of Columbia's [recent research](#) documenting the effect the Medicaid expansion in reducing infant mortality for struggling parents, any attempts to defund Medicaid will **harm** our mothers, and will further entrench systemic medical trauma in redlined Black and Latine communities.
- The answer is not reducing overhead – the answer is levying **more** tax monies. Taxing income earners and households of over 300k is the only ethical and just solution to help our communities.
  - Regardless of the amount received by any Federal support bills, this absolutely must be pursued in order to build back our communities hit hardest by COVID (to say the least of New York's history of institutionalized racist practices).

Thank you for your time. I will look for your comments tomorrow on these issues.

Best,

Alex

Alex Baer, MA  
Care Coordination Supervisor  
Pathways, Inc.  
160 Allens Creek Road Suite 250 Rochester, NY 14618  
Phone: 585-434-3166 x108  
Cell: 585-450-6159  
Fax: 585-434-3167  
Pronouns: *He/They*

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