



Association for Community Living



**Joint Senate/Assembly Budget Hearing on Mental Hygiene Testimony of Sebrina Barrett
Executive Director of the Association for Community Living
February 16, 2023**

I am Sebrina Barrett, executive director of the Association for Community Living. Thank you to Senator Krueger, Assemblywoman Weinstein, and the chairs and members of the Senate and Assembly Fiscal and Mental Health committees for this opportunity to testify.

Our members provide community-based mental health housing for more than 40,000 New Yorkers with severe mental illness, who are working toward recovery and independence.

Housing providers are persevering through many ongoing challenges — such as crippling inflation, sustained workforce shortages and serving aging residents who are experiencing significant medical concerns—even though their resources to do so are shrinking.

And yet, they have HOPE, because of Governor Hochul. Over the past several months, Governor Hochul has not only elevated the importance of mental health through her words, she has ensured, through her actions, that mental health services and support are a priority in New York State. This is remarkable because, for years, the needs of those with mental illness have not only been ignored, they have been left behind.

Governor Hochul inherited a mental health housing system that boasts an exceptional mission powered by exceptional staff, BUT that system is on life support because, for so long, it has received inadequate resources.

Today, though, we are optimistic because we believe we have a partner in our Governor, who understands the importance of our work and the challenges we face.

We support her plan to develop 3500 new housing units, across the continuum of care. We also support OMH's management of the development funds; OMH has the expertise and network of statewide housing providers who can help ensure these funds are used where the need is greatest. OMH has already begun to engage stakeholders, and we look forward to continued dialogue.

But equally important: Governor Hochul has followed through on her promise to include \$39 Million for rate increases for existing homes. This is crucial because even while we are developing NEW beds, we can't risk losing the homes currently in operation. And this risk is real — we face an average 25% staff vacancy rate due to an inability to pay a living wage, leading to severe workforce shortages. We face enormous rising costs for operating expenses such as fuel, food, and insurance. And the people who depend on us require a higher level of care because they are experiencing more complex concerns due to multiple co-occurring mental and physical conditions.

This is our reality. We face a \$96 million shortfall, the amount needed just to level-set us to where we were years ago. I cannot emphasize enough that this budget will help, and we are thankful. The 2.5% COLA included in the Executive Budget will help, but due to decades of neglect and massive inflation, we need more. The annual measure used to calculate the COLA, the CPI, was at 8.5% in 2022. Our providers feel the same strain on their budgets as every New Yorker feels, when sitting at the kitchen table, trying to figure out how to stretch their

dollars; how to do more with less. But we've been playing the "do more with less" game for so long, we are running out of options and waitlists continue to grow.

For these reasons, we ask that you build on the Governor's funding plan which includes the \$39 million for our rate increase so that we can absorb rising operation costs and pay our employees that work so hard caring for some of the State's most vulnerable. In addition, we support our colleagues in the behavioral health system who are calling for an 8.5% COLA.

Finally, many of our residents are aging in place—more than 40% of our residents are age 55 and over, and they are experiencing a total of 166 different medical conditions. The highest reported include: hypertension, diabetes, COPD, heart disease, arthritis, cancer and dementia. For most of these individuals, transition to assisted living or a nursing home isn't an option — nursing homes won't admit residents with a severe mental illness, and even if they would, they aren't able to address ongoing mental health and substance use disorder needs of the population served.

As the aging population in mental health community-based housing continues to grow, we must equip agencies with the resources needed to care for the residents they have been serving for decades. More than 75% of the housing providers who responded to our survey stated that they are not equipped to assist their residents with their aging medical concerns. They need nursing staff, on-site health aids, ADA compliant space to assist with mobility, additional staff training and better pay for staff.

Last year, the Legislature passed a bill to create a commission that would study how we can serve residents who are aging in place; however, that bill was vetoed because it was acted on by the Legislature outside the budget process. This year, we ask that you include the creation of a task force on aging in place in the budget, so that we eliminate that barrier, and can convene a group of those with expertise in housing, aging and mental illness to develop solutions to address this pressing challenge. The number of residents with medical challenges in mental health housing is growing, and we can no longer delay the action needed to ensure they can age with grace and comfort in their homes for as long as possible.

Thank you.



OMH Funded Supported Housing – 2023 Adequate Rate One Bedroom Apartment

The following explains the accompanying chart
It computes an adequate SH rate in each county

This chart was first created in 2002. It has been updated each year to reflect changes in HUD FMR, SSI rates, OMH increases/decreases and policy that effect funding, e.g. caseloads.

- A. **RENT:** Based on HUD Fiscal-Year 2023 Fair Year Market Rents for a **One Bedroom apartment**
- B. **RENT PAID BY RESIDENTS:** Residents pay 30% of income, typically the 2023 SSI living alone rate of \$1001/month, which is \$300.30 per month or \$3603 per year.
- C. **TOTAL PROPERTY COST TO AGENCY:** Column A minus column B.
- D. **OTHER THAN PERSONAL SERVICES (OTPS):** \$2,000 per SH slot - Based upon a realistic estimate of costs that includes travel, insurance, office supplies, telephone, computers, office rent, etc.
- E. **CASE MANAGER:** \$45,500 = \$35,000 salary plus \$10,500 for fringe benefits (30%) for a case manager With a caseload of 20. A 15% differential is included for downstate counties: \$52,325 = \$40,250 salary plus \$12,075 for fringe benefits (30%)
- F. **SUPERVISOR:** \$53,6900 = \$45,000 salary plus \$13,500 for fringe benefits (30%) for a supervisor with a caseload of 100 consumers or 5 case managers. A 15% differential is added for downstate counties: \$67,275 = \$51,750 salary plus \$15,525 for fringe benefits (30%)
- G. **ADMINISTRATION and OVERHEAD (A&OH);** at 15% on columns D through F.
- H. **ADEQUATE SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE:** Total of cost columns C-G.
- I. **CURRENT SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE:** This is the rate SOMH pays by county for each supported housing unit in each county as of January 1, 2023.
- J. **SHORTFALL:** This number is the difference between column H and column I per bed.
- K. **NUMBER OF SH BEDS:** The actual number of beds in each county. This number is from the OMH Residential Program Indicators Report issued on September 30, 2022 .
- L. **TOTAL COUNTY SHORTFALL:** The shortfall per bed (Column J) multiplied by the number of beds in the county (Column K) equals the actual shortfall in dollars specific to each county.

| | HUD FAIR MARKET RENT | RENT PAID BY RESIDENTS | TOTAL PROPERTY COST TO AGENCY | O.T.P.S. | HOUSING DIRECT CARE STAFF | SUPERVISOR | A&OH at 15% | ADEQUATE SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE PER BED/YEAR | CURRENT SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE | SHORTFALL PER BED PER YEAR | NUMBER OF S.H. BEDS | TOTAL COUNTY SHORTFALL |
|-------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|---------------------------|------------|-------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| | A | - B | = C | + D | + E | + F | + G | = H | - I | = J | x K | = L |
| ALBANY | 12948 | 3603 | 9345 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 14,934 | 12707 | 2,227 | 287 | 639,149 |
| ALLEGANY | 8028 | 3603 | 4425 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,014 | 9402 | 612 | 29 | 17,748 |
| BRONX | 26,040 | 3603 | 22437 | 2,000 | 2616 | 673 | 793 | 28,519 | 24621 | 3,898 | 2386 | 9,301,463 |
| BROOME | 9096 | 3603 | 5493 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,082 | 9468 | 1,614 | 268 | 432,552 |
| CATTARAUGUS | 7896 | 3603 | 4293 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 9,882 | 9402 | 480 | 117 | 56,160 |
| CAYUGA | 8808 | 3603 | 5205 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,794 | 9576 | 1,218 | 68 | 82,824 |
| CHAUTAUQUA | 7884 | 3603 | 4281 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 9,870 | 9402 | 468 | 98 | 45,864 |
| CHEMUNG | 9720 | 3603 | 6117 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,706 | 10369 | 1,337 | 150 | 200,550 |
| CHENANGO | 8352 | 3603 | 4749 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,338 | 9108 | 1,230 | 53 | 65,190 |
| CLINTON | 9348 | 3603 | 5745 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,334 | 9685 | 1,649 | 59 | 97,291 |
| COLUMBIA | 11424 | 3603 | 7821 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 13,410 | 11772 | 1,638 | 47 | 76,986 |
| CORTLAND | 9360 | 3603 | 5757 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,346 | 10129 | 1,217 | 57 | 69,369 |
| DELAWARE | 8676 | 3603 | 5073 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,662 | 9264 | 1,398 | 37 | 51,726 |
| DUTCHESS | 14796 | 3603 | 11193 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 16,782 | 14739 | 2,043 | 291 | 594,513 |
| ERIE | 10896 | 3603 | 7293 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 12,882 | 11197 | 1,685 | 1034 | 1,742,290 |
| ESSEX | 9864 | 3603 | 6261 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,850 | 10321 | 1,529 | 33 | 50,457 |
| FRANKLIN | 8520 | 3603 | 4917 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,506 | 9600 | 906 | 45 | 40,770 |
| FULTON | 8868 | 3603 | 5265 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,854 | 9756 | 1,098 | 37 | 40,626 |
| GENESEE | 9324 | 3603 | 5721 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,310 | 9885 | 1,625 | 47 | 76,375 |
| GREENE | 11172 | 3603 | 7569 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 13,158 | 11436 | 1,722 | 44 | 75,768 |
| HAMILTON | 9240 | 3603 | 5637 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,226 | 9637 | 1,589 | 9 | 14,301 |
| HERKIMER | 9108 | 3603 | 5505 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,094 | 9612 | 1,482 | 40 | 59,280 |
| JEFFERSON | 11136 | 3603 | 7533 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 13,122 | 11573 | 1,549 | 64 | 99,136 |
| KINGS | 26,040 | 3603 | 22437 | 2,000 | 2616 | 673 | 793 | 28,519 | 24621 | 3,898 | 2,711 | 10,568,427 |
| LEWIS | 8304 | 3603 | 4701 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,290 | 9348 | 942 | 53 | 49,926 |
| LIVINGSTON | 11400 | 3603 | 7797 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 13,386 | 11388 | 1,998 | 30 | 59,940 |
| MADISON | 10764 | 3603 | 7161 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 12,750 | 10648 | 2,102 | 32 | 67,264 |
| MONROE | 11400 | 3603 | 7797 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 13,386 | 11388 | 1,998 | 613 | 1,224,774 |
| MONTGOMERY | 8352 | 3603 | 4749 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,338 | 9805 | 533 | 40 | 21,320 |
| NASSAU | 22968 | 3603 | 19365 | 2,000 | 2616 | 673 | 793 | 25,447 | 20615 | 4,832 | 975 | 4,711,541 |
| NEW YORK | 26,040 | 3603 | 22437 | 2,000 | 2616 | 673 | 793 | 28,519 | 24621 | 3,898 | 1746 | 6,806,519 |
| NIAGARA | 10896 | 3603 | 7293 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 12,882 | 11197 | 1,685 | 167 | 281,395 |
| ONEIDA | 9108 | 3603 | 5505 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,094 | 9612 | 1,482 | 214 | 317,148 |
| ONONDAGA | 10764 | 3603 | 7161 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 12,750 | 10648 | 2,102 | 350 | 735,700 |
| ONTARIO | 11400 | 3603 | 7797 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 13,386 | 11388 | 1,998 | 77 | 153,846 |
| ORANGE | 14796 | 3603 | 11193 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 16,782 | 14739 | 2,043 | 376 | 768,168 |
| ORLEANS | 11400 | 3603 | 7797 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 13,386 | 11388 | 1,998 | 31 | 61,938 |
| OSWEGO | 10764 | 3603 | 7161 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 12,750 | 10648 | 2,102 | 65 | 136,630 |
| OTSEGO | 9924 | 3603 | 6321 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,910 | 10260 | 1,650 | 38 | 62,700 |
| PUTNAM | 26040 | 3603 | 22437 | 2,000 | 2616 | 673 | 793 | 28,519 | 23238 | 5,281 | 78 | 411,945 |
| QUEENS | 26040 | 3603 | 22437 | 2,000 | 2616 | 673 | 793 | 28,519 | 24621 | 3,898 | 2213 | 8,627,049 |
| RENSSELAER | 12948 | 3603 | 9345 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 14,934 | 12707 | 2,227 | 135 | 300,845 |
| RICHMOND | 26040 | 3603 | 22437 | 2,000 | 2616 | 673 | 793 | 28,519 | 24621 | 3,898 | 1095 | 4,268,693 |
| ROCKLAND | 26040 | 3603 | 22437 | 2,000 | 2616 | 673 | 793 | 28,519 | 23843 | 4,676 | 212 | 991,386 |
| SARATOGA | 12948 | 3603 | 9345 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 14,934 | 12707 | 2,227 | 57 | 126,939 |
| SCHENECTADY | 12948 | 3603 | 9345 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 14,934 | 12707 | 2,227 | 156 | 347,412 |
| SCHOHARIE | 12948 | 3603 | 9345 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 14,934 | 12707 | 2,227 | 39 | 86,853 |
| SCHUYLER | 8436 | 3603 | 4833 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,422 | 9402 | 1,020 | 12 | 12,240 |
| SENECA | 8784 | 3603 | 5181 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,770 | 9685 | 1,085 | 37 | 40,145 |
| ST.LAWRENCE | 8904 | 3603 | 5301 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,890 | 9576 | 1,314 | 102 | 134,028 |
| STEBEN | 8568 | 3603 | 4965 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 10,554 | 9402 | 1,152 | 127 | 146,304 |
| SUFFOLK | 22968 | 3603 | 19365 | 2,000 | 2616 | 673 | 793 | 25,447 | 20615 | 4,832 | 1533 | 7,407,993 |
| SULLIVAN | 10056 | 3603 | 6453 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 12,042 | 10945 | 1,097 | 71 | 77,887 |
| TIOGA | 9096 | 3603 | 5493 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,082 | 9469 | 1,613 | 27 | 43,551 |
| TOMPKINS | 15312 | 3603 | 11709 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 17,298 | 13648 | 3,650 | 78 | 284,700 |
| ULSTER | 13860 | 3603 | 10257 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 15,846 | 13629 | 2,217 | 172 | 381,324 |
| WARREN | 10752 | 3603 | 7149 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 12,738 | 11652 | 1,086 | 57 | 61,902 |
| WASHINGTON | 10752 | 3603 | 7149 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 12,738 | 11652 | 1,086 | 5 | 5,430 |
| WAYNE | 11400 | 3603 | 7797 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 13,386 | 11388 | 1,998 | 80 | 159,840 |
| WESTCHESTER | 20028 | 3603 | 16425 | 2,000 | 2616 | 673 | 793 | 22,507 | 20146 | 2,361 | 890 | 2,101,802 |
| WYOMING | 7536 | 3603 | 3933 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 9,522 | 9402 | 120 | 26 | 3,120 |
| YATES | 9084 | 3603 | 5481 | 2,000 | 2275 | 585 | 729 | 11,070 | 9685 | 1,385 | 14 | 19,390 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 20034 | 65,998,002 |



OMH MENTAL HEALTH HOUSING:

\$96.1 Million Total for Existing Housing Rate Enhancements

LICENSED PROGRAMS:

Transitional & Long-Term Transitional Housing with Treatment and Supports

Community Residence program (CRs and TAP): Capacity 2- 24 **\$8.1 million**

- Includes licensed Community Residences and Treatment Apartments
- 8,995 residential opportunities (3,900 CR beds and 5,095 TAP beds)
- This would make up for losses of 42% due to inflation.

Licensed Community Residence-Single Room Occupancy (CR-SRO): Capacity up to 100 unit **\$9.6 million**

- 3,348 residential opportunities
 - This would bring the existing units up to the new Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) amount of \$25,000 per bed – ESSHI is developing programs that have fewer obligations, pay much higher rates and include annual contractual escalators tied to inflation.

UNLICENSED PROGRAMS:

Permanent Housing with Supports

Supportive Permanent Housing in congregate facilities – SP-SROs: Capacity up to 100 units **\$12.4 million**

- 5,862 units of housing with supports (Non-ESSH units)
- This would bring the existing units up to the ESSHI amount of \$25,000 per bed – ESSHI rates include annual contractual escalators tied to inflation. ESSHI units and SP-SRO units are virtually identical in the services provided.

Supported Housing in scattered apartments: Capacity 1- 3 **\$66 million**

- 20,034 Supported Housing units – These programs are currently funded from \$9,264 - \$24,621 depending on geographic location. This increase is based on a formula that considers the fair market rents in each county and an acceptable rate for all other expenses associated with operating the program.

OTHER PRIORITIES

DEVELOPMENT

Support the Governor’s proposal to have close to \$1 Billion in OMH Funding for enhanced community services including 3,500 new units of housing over 5 years.

- This proposal provides OMH Capital funding to create an array of housing options including both licensed and unlicensed units.

AGING IN PLACE TASK FORCE

Establish an Aging on Place Taskforce to make recommendations on how best to serve individuals in Mental Health Housing who are over age 55 with co-occurring medical needs.

8.5% Cost Of Living Adjustment

Provide an 8.5% COLA to Behavioral Health Programs to offset the many years of no increases in funding.

Senate Bill S1291 (Brouk)

Establish an annual human services COLA indexed to inflation.

