



Testimony for the 2024 NEW YORK STATE EXECUTIVE BUDGET for HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

My name is Marla and I work as a part of the Treatment Team at Binghamton General Hospital inpatient psychiatric unit, Memorial 5. I am an LCAT with 24 years' experience.

I am grateful to the Governor and legislature for the increased attention to the mental health needs of New Yorkers and the shortage of therapists to care for them. Our treatment team is interdisciplinary and includes social workers, MDs, NPs, psychologists, and NYS licensed mental health practitioners including LCATs (Licensed Creative Arts Therapists). At Binghamton General Hospital, we are the only hospital within an hour radius with inpatient psychiatric units. We currently have 3 different psych units with a total of 56 beds. The Counseling Department on the Psychiatric units is made up of 4 full time Therapists. The Counseling dept. provides all of the counseling and therapy services for the patients on the psych unit including assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, group therapy, individual therapy, and vocational assessments.

We currently employ 3 Licensed Creative Arts Therapists out of the 4 full time staff in the Counseling dept, who work on the front lines of our mental health crisis.

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of myself and our organization due to urgent concern that the proposed Health and Mental Hygiene Bill Part Q be amended to include LCATs who are currently providing essential mental health care to many of our most vulnerable New Yorkers. There is a great need and we have heard that there are not enough providers working with Medicaid consumers. LCATs have experience with this population and can immediately help close the gap in care.

Excluding nearly 2000 licensed providers undermines the state's ability to solve the current crisis. We at Binghamton General Hospital inpatient psychiatric unit, Memorial 5 deeply value the front line psychotherapy services our LCATs provide to our patients, many of whom struggle with: severe and persistent mental illness, PTSD, substance use, and other mental health disorders.

LCATs have specialized skills and training in providing psychotherapy to those who are not effectively served by talk therapy methods. This includes people from different cultures, non-English speakers, BIPOC, and LGBTQI+ communities. Creative arts therapists are often the first responders after events of unspeakable traumas like mass violence and natural disasters, in working with young children exposed to violence and abuse, and with youth and adults, including veterans who have PTSD.

Please include these highly qualified, highly effective existing mental health professionals in this very important bill.

This letter and the amendment to add back in LCAT's to the proposed Health and Mental Hygiene Bill Part Q is supported by Binghamton General Hospital and,

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