



ACTION ALERT

120 West 57 Street New York, NY 10019 Phone 212 586-4555 Fax 212 541-6183

A non-profit tax-exempt organization representing New York City's community-based mental health sector.

CBO's Need \$\$ for Transition to Managed Care

The Issue

Voluntary and public hospitals happily received more than a billion dollars over a five year period as part of the State's grant of its 1115 waiver by HCFA. These dollars were granted to help those institutions transition to managed care over five years.

Yet hospitals are only one aspect of the health care safety net delivery system of New York City. Notably absent from the waiver deal is any meaningful support to other significant components of that system--notably community based organizations such as mental health agencies, free standing community mental health centers, substance abuse and alcoholism services agencies, family planning centers and others. The community based system, which has few resources to invest in a meaningful transition to managed care, has not been included in the State's and HCFA's transition planning around the waiver. Ours are the very organizations that serve the neediest and poorest populations in the City!

What will happen to many of our agencies under the waiver who have long served as a safety net for Medicaid eligible and the uninsured consumers if transition dollars are not available? They will enter the new market environment at risk, potentially putting our consumers at risk as well as the communities we serve.

New York City's community based mental health organizations serve over 500,000 of the most vulnerable New Yorkers with mental illness and emotional disturbances in New York City, both adults and children. They provide treatment, residential services, rehabilitative services, outreach, clubhouse services, case management, respite care and much more. Many of our clients have other special needs that complicate their service needs such as other physical disabilities, HIV/AIDS, homelessness, substance dependence and the social isolation of the fragile elderly. Our agencies possess both specialized expertise, developed over years of working with special populations and relationships with these consumers that have been nurtured over time. Community based agencies are linguistically and culturally competent and serve all of the neighborhoods and populations of our incredibly diverse City.

HCFA and New York State must provide for the transition of community based agencies to managed care. This includes technical assistance and training, retraining of staff and investment in

essential infrastructure.

Action Requested

FAX and call **your elected officials** as well as the elected and public officials listed below. (Call us at 586-4555 if you require a list of your local elected officials.) Let them know that:

- Community based care, the **safety net** for hundreds of thousands of vulnerable Medicaid recipients and the uninsured, will be jeopardized without substantial assistance to effect a meaningful transition to managed care.
- It has long been proved that community based care is the most **cost-effective and clinically effective** care.
- Community based care affords people dignity and hope as well as a chance to recover and live productive lives among a community of people who provide them support and the care they need.

Substantial money is needed for:

- staff technical assistance and retraining;
- infra structural support such as MIS systems and related technology,
- updating community facilities and delivery systems.

Otherwise, the system of community based care will be imperiled and the lives of vulnerable and needy people will be negatively impacted.

Ask your local officials to press the Governor, HCFA officials, Secretary of HHS Donna Shalala to find substantial dollars to support the transition of community based agencies to managed care.

- Secretary Donna E. Shalala, Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201 (FED EX or mail letters)
- Governor George E. Pataki, **FAX:** (518) 486-4464; (212) 7681-4643
- Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato, **FAX:** (202) 224-5871
- Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, **FAX:** (202) 228-3815
- Representative Charles E. Schumer, **FAX:** (718) 627-3411
- Representative Edolphus Towns, **FAX:** (718) 387-4045