



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement from Cal Hedigan (she/her), CEO of [Community Access](https://www.communityaccess.org), in response to Gov. Hochul's mental health announcements in the 2023 State of the State address

"I want to begin by thanking Governor Hochul for prioritizing investment in mental health services in New York State. Her commitment to the mental health sector is evident. Furthermore, Governor Hochul's attention to the workforce crisis in our sector and the need for ongoing investment to recruit and retain the New Yorkers who carry out this essential work is much appreciated.

I applaud Governor Hochul's plan to dramatically expand investment in outpatient services as well as expanding insurance coverage for mental health services. Both initiatives are critical if we are to increase timely access to community-based services. But I am concerned that the New Yorkers most directly impacted have not been given a voice in identifying which services should be prioritized for investment.

While Governor Hochul is right in recognizing the urgent need for more housing units to serve people living with mental health concerns, I am troubled that only 1,500 of the 3,500 new units she proposes will provide permanent, supportive housing. It is deeply misguided to invest further in temporary, transitional housing when we know, empirically, that what's needed and most effective is permanent, supportive housing.

I am most alarmed by the Governor's plan to bring 1,000 inpatient beds online (850 restored, 150 new). New York State's goal should be to increase voluntary treatment that upholds the rights and dignity of New Yorkers living with mental health concerns or experiencing mental health crises, and to provide accessible options within community-based settings. Inpatient care is too-often coercive and traumatic for those who are relegated to locked wards. I urge the Governor to heed the wisdom of providers, advocates, and peers on this issue."

[About Community Access](#)

Community Access expands opportunities for people living with mental health concerns to recover from trauma and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy, and

healing-focused services. We are built upon the simple truth that people are experts in their own lives. www.communityaccess.org