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NY Child Mental Health Advocates Respond to Fiscal Year 2024 New York State Budget

NEW YORK – In response to the passage of New York’s Fiscal Year 2024 State Budget, Alice Bufkin, Associate Executive Director of Policy & Advocacy at Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York, released the following statement on behalf of the [Campaign for Healthy Minds, Healthy Kids](#):

“The Campaign for Healthy Minds, Healthy Kids is deeply disturbed by the lack of targeted investments in prevention, treatment, and recovery services for children and families in the Fiscal Year 2024 New York State Budget. While we acknowledge the budget’s significant capital investments in behavioral health, the stark reality is that the budget does not adequately address the urgent mental health needs of children or the severe workforce shortages that are driving families into emergency rooms or onto waitlists for months or years as they seek critical services for their children.

For too long, children and families in New York have struggled to get the life-saving mental health services they need. We are glad that the budget includes a handful of investments targeting children’s needs, including \$5 million for the HealthySteps program, \$5 million for high fidelity wraparound services for children, \$10 million for youth suicide prevention, \$10 million to increase reimbursement rates for school-based mental health clinics, and additional funding for Home Based Crisis Intervention. Though these investments are needed and appreciated, they do not address the larger structural issues that have led to a severe crisis in access to services. The proposed 8.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) would have moved the state in the right direction; unfortunately, the 4% COLA in the final budget falls far short of what’s needed.

Children and families are in desperate need of care after decades of disinvestment in New York’s behavioral health care system. Each week, we hear from families across the state who have been waitlisted for months or years trying to get the right mental health supports for their children, or who are cycling in and out of emergency rooms because they can’t get the care they

need. Our state continues to ignore the simple fact that by making significant investments in services for children, we can help prevent the emergence of complex and acute mental health and substance use disorder needs among adults. Children deserve access to a continuum of reliable mental health services in their schools, communities, and clinics – this budget fails to deliver on these needs.

In the coming months, we will work with other advocates, children, parents and caregivers to continue elevating these issues and advocating for more investments for children and families. We look forward to partnering with Governor Hochul and state legislators to continue enhancing and strengthening our state’s mental health care system for children and families.”

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ABOUT

[The Campaign for Healthy Minds, Healthy Kids](#) is a statewide coalition of behavioral health providers, advocates, and New York families, joining together to create the public and political will necessary to ensure all children and adolescents in New York receive the high-quality behavioral health services they need.