

PROTECT ACCESSIBLE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

STOP THE REDUCTION OF SERVICES TO PATIENTS WITH SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS

The Proposal:

The Executive Budget proposes closing or downsizing Office of Mental Health inpatient facilities without identifying facilities and without notice; and converting Brooklyn Children's Psychiatric Center to a community-based program for children with serious emotional disturbance.

The Problem:

Closures may deprive the mentally ill of access to care and place the mentally ill far from their families. No information is provided in the budget about which facilities will be closed or downsized, which affects not only the employees, the patients and their families – but entire communities.

The Solution:

Require identification of locations before inpatient closures or downsizing decisions are made. Don't deprive residents in need of intense patient care by forcing them out of inpatient services – reject converting the Brooklyn Children's Psychiatric Center to a community-based program.

FACT

Entire communities are unable to plan for their health care needs because the budget fails to identify which facilities will be reduced until AFTER the budget is enacted, leaving the communities no voice in their mental health needs.

FACT

The loss of psychiatric hospital beds has been shown to result in the use of local hospitals and emergency rooms for mental health care—taking up valuable emergency room beds and causing lengthy waiting time for medical emergency cases.

FACT

Closures may result in mentally ill patients being sent hours away from the family and friends necessary for successful recovery.

FACT

Brooklyn's seriously emotionally disturbed youth will not have access to local inpatient or outpatient care. The conversion plan closes the facility long before community based services will be in place.

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KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE!

PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES

Stop the Repeal of the 12 Month Notice Laws

The Proposal:

The Executive Budget proposes eliminating statutory notice provisions currently required prior to the closure of a state corrections, juvenile justice, or mental health facility.

The Problem:

The 12 month notice provisions give families, communities, and employees an opportunity to adequately prepare for the upheaval caused by closures.

The Solution:

Maintain the current law. In unique cases, where immediate action is required, the Governor has asked for and received special consideration from the legislature to close facilities immediately notwithstanding notice requirements. This is an appropriate check and balance on the Governor's authority which the Legislature should not abdicate.

FACT Notice provisions do not prevent the Executive from closing facilities. They ensure that the implementation of closure decisions are thought-out with ample opportunity for uprooted service recipients, economically devastated communities, and families of employees who may lose their jobs to plan for the drastic impacts of closures.

FACT Without a 12 month notice law, the Governor can unilaterally close facilities with no opportunity for legislators to advocate for their community's interests.

FACT Recognizing the importance of giving notice to groups dealing with closures, the legislature has actually sought in recent years to strengthen their provisions and expand their scope. In 2010, the Senate and Assembly *unanimously* passed legislation A11330-A/S8022 which would require stronger reporting under the law prior to a prison closure.

FACT Proponents of eliminating the notice requirements point to recent reports of vacant facilities that are "fully" staffed. They conveniently ignore the fact that management controls the population of these facilities and deliberately chose to vacate them in order to score cheap political points in the press. Proponents also ignore that some employees purported to be at these facilities may only be technically assigned to them, but in reality providing services elsewhere.

FACT In cases where staff is assigned to an underutilized facility, that is the fault of bad management. It is not the workers' fault. Management could have continued to provide services in these facilities until the notice provision was satisfied. Adopting the Governor's proposal would reward those bad management practices while penalizing the workers who did not cause the problem.

Help communities, consumers, and workers faced with state facility closures.

==== **KEEP THE 12 MONTH NOTICE LAWS** =====



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