



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Senator Carlucci Announces Key Committee Victories Included in the 2014-2015 Adopted State Budget

DAVID CARLUCCI March 31, 2014

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ALBANY, NY - Today, Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester), Chair of the Senate Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee, announced that the state Senate has passed many of his original legislative proposals that will provide significant investments into new and existing programs that will benefit our most vulnerable populations. This was accomplished while successfully passing another on-time budget for the fourth year in a row.

Senator Carlucci said: "Together, we have formulated a budget that truly reflects the priorities and needs of all New Yorkers, especially those who rely on services that improve their quality of life. We've increased funding by \$25 million dollars to increase and expand community mental health supports and services, fought for higher pay for direct support providers who are our most under-appreciated professionals and clinicians and incentivized employers to take on a new generation of employees through our InspireNY tax credit. We have made tremendous progress over the course of the past few months, and I look forward to continuing to advocate the rest of this legislation session for those who depend upon quality services."

Many of the components included in this year's Health and Mental Health Budget include:

### **Incentivizing Job Creation Through InspireNY**

The passage of InspireNY will incentivize businesses to hire people with developmental disabilities, helping thousands of New Yorkers not only embrace a sense of belonging in the community, but inspire them to reach for their full potential. By working together with the private sector, we will ensure that all New Yorkers have a chance to earn a solid day's pay and live the quality of life they rightfully deserve. Businesses will receive up to \$5,000 for hiring each full-time employee and up to \$2,500 for hiring each part-time employee.

### **Managed Care Advocacy**

A managed care advocacy program for persons with developmental disabilities will be established to provide advocacy for people with developmental disabilities who are being moved to managed care. This program is now more important than ever because of the shift to managed care, and we need to ensure that people with developmental disabilities will not be mistreated.

### **Paying our Professionals Fairly**

This budget increases wages for our Direct Support Professionals, workers who remain the backbone of our mental health system. Many of these hardworking employees have not seen a raise in six years and most earn a paltry sum of roughly \$30,000 annually. Beginning on January 1, 2015, these professionals will finally see a 2% cost of living increase, and in April 1, 2015, this 2% increase will also apply to clinical staff.

### **Credential Pilot Program**

Through negotiations, Senator Carlucci was able to secure funding to conduct a study that would provide the framework for the establishment of a Direct Service Professional Credentialing Pilot Program. This is important because we are creating a career ladder which will help to retain the best care for our loved ones with developmental disabilities and in then provide a higher level or care.

### **Community Reinvestment of Mental Health Facilities**

After years of undervaluing the cost of hospital beds at various mental health facilities, this budget makes adjustments so that more money will be invested into our overall system. Previously, the cost of an individual bed was pegged at just \$70,000, while this new budget appropriately readjusts the cost of each bed to \$110,000.