



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Senator Montgomery joins colleagues to urge Governor Cuomo to invest in Children's Behavioral Health Services

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| ISSUE: **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CUTS, MEDICAID, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, HEALTH CARE, CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

| COMMITTEE: **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write to share concerns voiced by our constituents about the inability of children and families to access behavioral health services in their communities. As the opioid epidemic continues to impact thousands of infants and families and as youth suicide rates steeply rise, we urge specific attention be paid to completing implementation of the Children's Subcommittee of the Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) recommendations on children's behavioral health. The reforms are poised to enhance access to these vital services at a time when approximately half of New York's children who desperately need mental health treatment or counseling are going without. It is indeed a critical time to invest in children's behavioral health services.

While the implementation of these substantive reforms is challenging, the design and plan for children's behavioral health capacity expansion and new resources are years in the making through the MRT process. In particular, the new Medicaid State Plan Services, called Children and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS), offered unprecedented

improvements in access to care for approximately 200,000 children enrolled in Medicaid.

Despite this recent step forward, the enhanced rates for CFTSS, which have ensured robust provider participation, were scheduled to be reduced at the end of the 2019 calendar year, putting many children and families at risk of losing access to this support. Moreover, it is important to note that even with the recent progress on CFTSS, less than five percent of eligible children are currently receiving services. At a time when CFTSS is still being implemented, acute rate reductions would indeed be devastating, and potentially fatal to providers' ability to offer these vital services to our youth and families.

To read the full Letter to Governor Cuomo, click [here](#).