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**“Nothing About Us,  
 Without Us”**

**Testimony of Friends of Recovery New York  
 (FOR-NY)**

**Impact of the FY 2020-2021 Executive Budget Proposal on the NYS Recovery Community**

**February 3, 2020**

**Presented by:**

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 Executive Director  
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 (FOR-NY)**

I am Angelia Smith-Wilson and as the Executive Director of Friends of Recovery- New York and a family member and ally to the recovery movement, I am honored to be invited by Senate Finance Chair Liz Krueger and Assembly Ways and Means Chair Helene Weinstein to examine the FY 2020-2021 Budget and how it may impact the New York State Recovery Community.

Friends of Recovery-New York represents the voice of individuals and families living in recovery from addiction, families who have lost a family member or people who have been otherwise impacted by addiction. The negative public perception and shame that surrounds addiction has prevented millions of individuals and family members from seeking help. FOR-NY is dedicated to breaking down the barriers created by negative public perception that result in discrimination and policies that block or interfere with accessing recovery support services: access to addiction treatment, healthcare; housing, education and employment.

FOR-NY also works to build an infrastructure around the state through local Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) that build supports for people living in recovery and others in need. Our network of RCOs are strongly in support of life saving, evidence-based practices to support people seeking recovery.

**Budget and Legislative Accomplishments over the past 5 years**

FOR-NY has been in existence since 2008 and thanks to advocates, in partnership with statewide decision makers, FOR-NY was able to hire staff starting in 2015. Since then, FOR-NY has sought out recovery champions from around the state to build recovery capital locally, and advocate on a statewide level. Through these efforts, we have made the following accomplishments with New York State dollars and advocacy efforts:

Year	Advocacy Efforts	Outcome
2015	Major advocacy campaigns by advocates in Long Island and Western NY	Funding for Friends of Recovery New York – over \$600,000 annually for 5 years for Leadership Development, Education and Training and Communications efforts
2016 - 17	Resulting community feedback generated by FOR-NY members received during the Heroin and Opiate Task Force listening tours conducted throughout the state in 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of Recovery Community and Outreach Centers- serving 16 counties, and 5 on the way</li> <li>• 18 Youth Clubhouses throughout the state</li> <li>• Peer Engagement Specialists serving 34 counties</li> <li>• Family Support Navigators serving 35 counties</li> </ul>
2018	FOR-NY Advocacy Day with nearly 1000 participants as well as results from community forums around NYS and a Recovery Community Assets Survey and Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passage of NYS Ombuds Program</li> <li>• \$200,000 Annually to Scholarship people with lived experience to become Certified Recovery Peer Advocates</li> </ul>
2019	Over 1200 advocates attending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery Tax Credit Program: \$2,000 per employer</li> </ul>

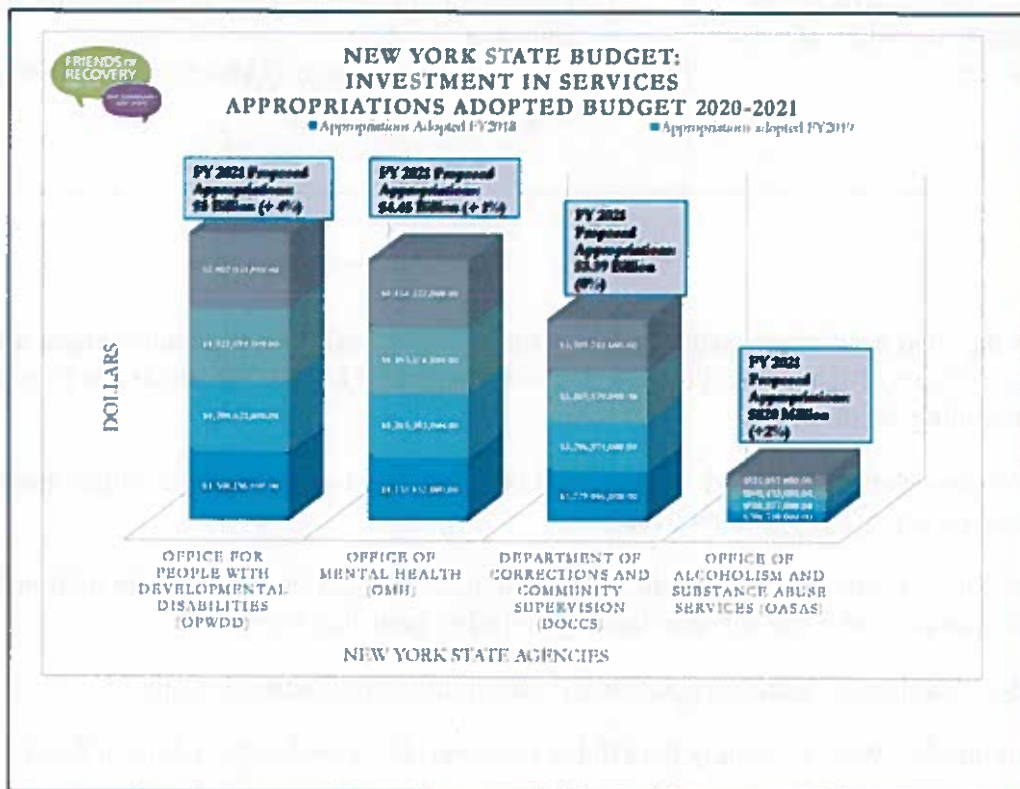
	Stand Up for Recovery Day – the biggest statewide advocacy turn out yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passage of Groundbreaking Mental Health Parity Package</li> <li>• Changing the name of OASAS to the Office of Addiction Supports and Services</li> </ul>
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Federal Money has also been strategically funneled through OASAS from the State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grants (2016-17) and the State Opioid Response (2017-18) which has helped to lift up communities including funding:

- Youth Voices Matter New York – over \$400,000 annually to lift up communities and build leadership in young people in recovery
- Funding for 20 Centers of Treatment Innovation (COTIs) that provide mobile treatment, telehealth and transportation to bring services directly to individuals that need them.
- As well as funding for additional Recovery Community and Outreach Centers

This federal funding has been extremely beneficial, however, is subject to the whim of federal decision makers.

In spite of these achievements, OASAS continues to be funded dismally compared to other agencies serving similar populations – OPWDD, OMH and DOCCS. ***Comparatively, OASAS’ budget is only 19% of these other budgets on average.*** Last year, we were disappointed to go another year without any increase in budget to OASAS (in fact there was a small decrease in funding *during this addiction crisis!*) This year we are pleased to see at least an increase in 2% in the budget for OASAS (see budget chart below) – however, as we will go into detail below, we need more!



In 2017 nationwide, 72,000 people (that we know of) died of an opioid overdose and 88,000 died from alcohol related deaths. While we are grateful that reported statistics show a decrease in deaths due to opioid overdoses between the years 2017-2018, we know that the number is still far too high and we must not stop until the number of overdose deaths is zero and we start addressing all addictions – as well as wellness, generally, not just addiction to opioids.

On October 22, 2019 at the New York State Recovery Conference, a room of 500 people peers in recovery, friends and family members of those in recovery, and allies to the recovery movement were assembled for the second day opening plenary session.

Those in the room were asked to participate in a “Text to Survey.”

Within 15 minutes, 130 respondents had responded to the survey.

In response to the question, “What are the top two most important recovery related needs in your community?”

- 34% of responses indicated a need for safe, affordable **HOUSING**;
- 18% of responses indicated a need for better, more accessible, more personalized **TREATMENT** options;

- 14% of responses indicated a need for more wrap around services or **RECOVERY ORIENTED SYSTEMS OF CARE (ROSC)**<sup>1</sup> for those leaving treatment, or those who never participated in treatment in the first place and are looking to maintain a healthy lifestyle in their communities;
- and 11% of respondents indicated a need for improved **TRANSPORTATION** options, particularly in rural communities.<sup>2</sup>

**Friends of Recovery – New York will be focusing on these four top issues raised by our community in our 2020 advocacy campaign.**

In light of these issues we are tackling the following **three during our advocacy in Albany:**

**ASK #1: Increase Funding: More funding is consistently and continually needed!**

- We calculate that we need approximately **\$40 million** in additional funding in order to provide services including Recovery Community Organizations, Recovery Community and Outreach Centers, Recovery Youth Clubhouses, Peer Engagement Specialists and Family Support Navigators in each county in NYS. See funding chart below.
- Since 2017 – Evidence Based Recovery Oriented Systems of Care were implemented around the state. These services have touched **over 250,000 since their inception in 2017** These services are saving lives. We need these services in every county!
- Also demand that any proceeds coming from Opioid settlement dollars are directed to Evidence Based Prevention, Treatment, Recovery and Harm Reduction Services! It is predicted that nationally, \$50 billion could be reconciled in the lawsuits. If New York State were to reconcile \$1 billion, \$40 million would be just .04% of this settlement – a drop in the bucket and the value is exponential.

**ASK #2: Certification of Recovery Housing that support Medication Assisted Treatment and Recovery**

- Individuals in early recovery must be protected and afforded a supportive living environment. We support regulations and supervision must be adopted within the parameters of the Federal Fair Housing Act in a manner that promotes integrity, upholds residents' rights, are recovery-oriented and conducive to optimum health and well-being.
- We support a standardized certification of recovery housing. We suggest using the standards created by the National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR).
- Certified recovery housing must also be inclusive of individuals using Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) to support their recovery.
- We support Legislation which would support New York State creating and maintaining standards for safe, affordable recovery housing.

**ASK #3: Support the Governor's legislation that addresses the Opioid Epidemic, including**

- Increases in residential treatment beds;
- Provisions to improve compliance with parity laws;

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<sup>1</sup> ,A ROSC is a coordinated network of community-based services and supports that is person-centered and builds on the strengths and resiliencies of individuals, families, and communities to achieve abstinence and improved health, wellness, and quality of life for those with or at risk of alcohol and drug problems.

<sup>2</sup> Less than 5% of responses (each) indicated a need for Harm Reduction; Public Awareness; Employment options; Mental Health services; Services for Families; Self Help options; Resources for young people; Insurance Barriers; Class issues; Services for pregnant women and people of color; Funding Shortages; and Prevention Services

- Continued funding for the NYS Ombudsman program;
- Expansion of the MAT and Emergency Referrals (MATTERS) Program – increasing access to MAT in Emergency Departments and connection to Treatment;
- MAT Telemedicine Program and Expanding access to Telehealth and Mobile Clinics – improving access for those who lack the benefit of reliable transportation;
- Expansion of MAT in Corrections;
- Other provisions that assist homeless populations and expanded workforce training

**New York must build Recovery Capital!**

Recovery is not just an individual or even a family issue or illness, it is a community issue. While recovery addresses many areas of concern, investing in the building recovery capital will begin to address the overall concerns of the recovery community.

As was stated earlier, FOR-NY approximates 40 million dollars in funding is needed to sufficiently begin to provide the recovery community with the appropriate amount of recovery capital. Depicted below is a chart that illustrates the current recovery capital (as defined by recovery community organizations, recovery community outreach centers, youth recovery community organizations and youth clubhouses, peer engagement specialists and family navigators) that is needed.

Program	How Many Counties are funded	How Many Counties Need this?		Cost for community investment	Investment Needed
Recovery Community Organization	Only one is funded (LRA)	61		\$150,000	\$9,150,000
Recovery Community Outreach Center	24	38	62	\$350,000	\$13,300,000
Recovery Youth Clubhouse	20	42	62	\$250,000	\$10,500,000
Peer Engagement Specialist (2 per county)	37	25	62	\$150,000	\$3,750,000
Family Support Navigators (2 per county)	39	23	62	\$100,000	\$2,300,000
Total Funding Needed					\$39,000,000