



**Joint Senate/Assembly Budget Hearing on Mental Hygiene
Testimony of Antonia Lasicki
Executive Director of ACL
February 3, 2020**

Good afternoon Senator Krueger, Assemblywoman Weinstein, Senator Carlucci, Assemblywoman Gunther, Members of the Committee and other members of the Legislature. My name is Toni Lasicki and I am the Executive Director of The Association for Community Living. ACL is a statewide membership organization of not-for-profit organizations that provide housing and rehabilitation services to more than 35,000 New Yorkers who have been diagnosed with serious and persistent psychiatric disabilities. They also operate many of the other mental health community-based services in the state.

My organization is a member of and helped to launch the *Bring It Home* campaign—a statewide coalition of community-based mental health housing providers, mental health advocates, faith leaders, consumers, and their families. Through education and advocacy, our coalition is working to bring better funding for better care to New Yorkers who live in mental health housing programs. To date, we have 152 organizations, more than 900 individuals and nearly 100 Faith leaders signed on as supporters. The providers in the group operate nearly all the nearly 40,000 community-based units of mental health housing in the state. We are also a member of the recently formed 3 for 5 Campaign that is asking for a 3% increase in rates for human services organizations in each of the next 5 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today and voice Bring It Home's and 3 for 5's message to secure adequate funding for our critical mental health community-based programs.

The Governor's proposed state budget adds \$20 million to raise rates for OMH Housing programs. We are very appreciative of this and ask that you support it. It is the largest single investment in the programs in many, many years. However, although the state has added \$50 million over the last 5 years, only some programs in certain geographical areas have received any increases. There are programs in places in NY that have yet to receive an increase in any of their rates in more than 12 years. Therefore, many of the programs have lost 40% - 70% of their funding due to inflation, depending on which model is being looked at – there are 5 models from 24 hour a day supervised settings to independent living. This new money will not significantly change that fact. Providers will continue to struggle to provide basic services to their clients. We appreciate the language that the Governor used in his proposal making "community based residential programs" eligible for the money. It does not restrict the money to certain programs or certain geographic locations as has been the case in the past. We look forward to hearing from OMH as to how the money will be allocated.

It is also important to note that some of the housing programs in some areas of the state that have received most of the increases of the last 5 years have lost more of their funding to the cost of rent increases than they have received. I have attached one chart that shows how the programs have fared compared to inflation over the last 20 years and another that shows what an adequate Supported Housing rate would be in each county in the state.

The fact is that we need \$165 million in additional funding to stabilize all 40,000 units of housing across the state. It may seem like a lot, but when you compare it to the cost of a state hospital, a jail or prison, a nursing home or even a shelter, it is very cost effective. These programs save lives and they save money.

I have been involved in mental health housing for more than 30 years. I was once a direct care worker, a program manager, a program director and an executive director. It is a fact that services for people in the programs have diminished while their needs have increased. The clients we serve come to us now with more and more behavioral health challenges, more physical challenges and chronic illnesses, and more substance use issues, yet the staffing levels have not changed since the 1980s. Our providers tell us every year that managing the

medical issues, e.g., diabetes, asthma, COPD, obesity, and the metabolic issues that result from years of taking strong anti-psychotic medications have become a serious challenge for their staff. They tell us that consumers' drug and alcohol use exacerbate their mental illnesses causing more serious behavioral issues.

New York has historically been a national leader in mental health care. Under the leadership of both Gov. Andrew Cuomo and his father Mario Cuomo – and with the strong support of the Legislature – New York set new national standards for caring for, and protecting, people with psychiatric disabilities. However, despite offering a breadth and depth of mental health housing that is unparalleled in the nation, (nearly 42,000 including state operated, all adult and children), the state has not kept its promise to adequately fund these housing programs that care for our family members, friends and neighbors who most need help.

Here is the reality: despite the most recent additional funds, including this year's additions, our mental health housing system is still at a critical juncture. By not providing these housing programs the funding they need, recovery can be impacted negatively to the point of destroying lives and families. Beyond those moral implications, ignoring this funding crisis creates a tremendous burden for New York's taxpayers. Vulnerable New Yorkers that rely on our services are at risk of displacement. They can be hospitalized, become homeless, enter nursing homes or become incarcerated – all at greater taxpayer expense than the support we offer.

The residents who receive care in community-based housing are our neighbors and family members who suffer from psychiatric disabilities, and who deserve stable, affordable housing with supports and accessible treatment and services. Without the foundation of a stable home with supports, the most vulnerable of our neighbors need to constantly start their recovery over again, losing momentum and falling farther and farther away from becoming part of the community once again. Proper funding will end this inhumane cycle.

Please commit to working with the executive to address the remaining \$165 million deficit by adding an additional \$20 million to match the Governor's proposal, and developing a multiyear

plan to stabilize the approximately 40,000 units of housing. i.e., the workforce, services, property and administrative costs associated with the programs. This is for licensed community residences and CR-SROs that provide 24 hour a day supervision, as well as licensed treatment apartments that provide daily supports, unlicensed Supported Housing where the funding now goes primarily to rents with little to nothing left for services and SP-SROs that are losing money annually due to lack of increases.

3 FOR 5 Campaign

ACL is part of the Statewide #3for#5 campaign that is calling for a three percent increase in funding for not for profits in the human services sector every year for the next five years.

This campaign is unprecedented in its scope through the inclusion of every major Statewide not for profit agency in the mental health, addiction disorder, developmental disabilities, child welfare, foster care and aging community.

Existing law provides for an annual increase for these not for profits. Unfortunately, for the last decade, the funding increases for these agencies has not been included in the New York State Budget, a central reason why the housing programs mentioned above are in the dire straits that they are. This has resulted in a loss of over \$1 billion in promised financial support. The result is that the quality of services is declining, and agencies are unable to offer competitive living wages to attract and retain the skilled staff necessary to deliver quality care and support.

The importance of ACL's members cannot be overstated. Individuals rely on us to fulfill their dreams of independence and families rely on us to provide their loved ones with the quality care they need to keep them safe and thriving. Communities rely on us as economic engines, while employers and taxpayers rely on us to support New Yorkers in their home communities. We want to keep the homeless and those at risk of homelessness off the streets and adequately fed. We want to keep them out of other more expensive institutional settings and emergency rooms. We want to help them with their medications, with getting jobs, with repairing relationships and learning to live in the community of their choice. It does no good for them or for communities to leave people homeless, cold, starving, with no medications and a

future of cycling in and out of very expensive settings. This investment is a cost-effective win for all New Yorkers.

We urge the members of Senate Finance Committee and Assembly Ways and Means Committee to continue your leadership in the not for profit sector through your support of #3for#5.

Make no mistake about it - New York is facing a dilemma—we can either become a national model for how states can successfully protect a population that so desperately needs support or watch the housing system collapse and become an example of what can go wrong. It's time for our state leaders to make the right choice on their behalf. Let's show the rest of the country how to handle a health crisis and become a model of how a strong system can succeed when it's properly supported.

Recommendations:

- Add another \$162 million over the next 3 years to mental health housing rates to stabilize the workforce, services, property and administrative costs associated with the programs
- Support the 3 for 5 campaign's request that will keep these programs abreast of their obligations by adding an escalator to the contracts and rates for 5 years.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to address any questions you may have or to continue to discuss these crucial matters at any time in the future.

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OMH Funded Supported Housing – 2020 Adequate Rate One Bedroom Apartment

The following explains the accompanying chart
It computes an adequate SH rate in each county

This chart was first created in 2002. It has been updated each year to reflect changes in HUD FMR, SSI rates, OMH increases/decreases and policy that effect funding, e.g. caseloads.

- A. RENT:** Based on HUD Fiscal-Year 2020 Fair Year Market Rents for a **One Bedroom apartment**
- B. RENT PAID BY RESIDENTS:** Residents pay 30% of income, typically the 2020 SSI living alone rate of \$870/month, which is \$261 per month or \$3,132 per year.
- C. TOTAL PROPERTY COST TO AGENCY:** Column A minus column B.
- D. OTHER THAN PERSONAL SERVICES (OTPS):** \$2,000 per SH slot - Based upon a realistic estimate of costs that includes travel, insurance, office supplies, telephone, computers, office rent, etc.
- E. CASE MANAGER:** \$45,500 = \$35,000 salary plus \$10,500 for fringe benefits (30%) for a case manager With a caseload of 20. A 15% differential is included for downstate counties: \$52,325 = \$40,250 salary plus \$12,075 for fringe benefits (30%)
- F. SUPERVISOR:** \$53,6900 = \$45,000 salary plus \$13,500 for fringe benefits (30%) for a supervisor with a caseload of 100 consumers or 5 case managers. A 15% differential is added for downstate counties: \$67,275 = \$51,750 salary plus \$15,525 for fringe benefits (30%)
- G. ADMINISTRATION and OVERHEAD (A&OH);** at 15% on columns D through F.
- H. ADEQUATE SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE:** Total of cost columns C-G.
- I. CURRENT SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE:** This is the rate SOMH pays by county for each supported housing unit in each county as of January 1, 2020.
- J. SHORTFALL:** This number is the difference between column H and column I per bed.
- K. NUMBER OF SH BEDS:** The actual number of beds in each county. This number is from the OMH Residential Program Indicators Report issued on November 13, 2019.
- L. TOTAL COUNTY SHORTFALL:** The shortfall per bed (Column J) multiplied by the number of beds in the county (Column K) equals the actual shortfall in dollars specific to each county.

	HUD FAIR MARKET RENT	RENT PAID BY RESIDENTS	TOTAL PROPERTY COST TO AGENCY	O.T.P.S.	HOUSING DIRECT CARE STAFF	SUPERVISOR	A&OH at 15%	ADEQUATE SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE PER BED/YEAR	CURRENT SUPPORTED HOUSING RATE	SHORTFALL PER BED PER YEAR	NUMBER OF S.H BEDS	TOTAL COUNTY SHORTFALL
	A	- B	= C	+ D	+ E	+ F	+ G	= H	- I	= J	x K	= L
ALBANY	10260	3132	7128	2,000	2275	585	729	12,717	10259	2,458	287	705,446
ALLEGANY	6984	3132	3852	2,000	2275	585	729	9,441	8725	716	39	27,924
BRONX	20,568	3132	17436	2,000	2616	673	793	23,518	18005	5,513	2238	12,338,877
BROOME	7608	3132	4476	2,000	2275	585	729	10,065	8337	1,728	268	463,104
CATTARAUGUS	7020	3132	3888	2,000	2275	585	729	9,477	8725	752	117	87,984
CAYUGA	7884	3132	4752	2,000	2275	585	729	10,341	8337	2,004	68	136,272
CHAUTAUQUA	7128	3132	3996	2,000	2275	585	729	9,585	8725	860	98	84,280
CHEMUNG	8052	3132	4920	2,000	2275	585	729	10,509	8905	1,604	150	240,600
CHENANGO	7548	3132	4416	2,000	2275	585	729	10,005	8137	1,868	53	99,004
CLINTON	8052	3132	4920	2,000	2275	585	729	10,509	8539	1,970	59	116,230
COLUMBIA	9432	3132	6300	2,000	2275	585	729	11,889	10059	1,830	47	86,010
CORTLAND	8604	3132	5472	2,000	2275	585	729	11,061	8337	2,724	57	155,268
DELAWARE	7584	3132	4452	2,000	2275	585	729	10,041	8137	1,904	37	70,448
DUTCHESS	13344	3132	10212	2,000	2275	585	729	15,801	13661	2,140	291	622,740
ERIE	8436	3132	5304	2,000	2275	585	729	10,893	9105	1,788	1000	1,788,000
ESSEX	8520	3132	5388	2,000	2275	585	729	10,977	8539	2,438	33	80,454
FRANKLIN	7824	3132	4692	2,000	2275	585	729	10,281	8337	1,944	45	87,480
FULTON	8016	3132	4884	2,000	2275	585	729	10,473	8337	2,136	37	79,032
GENESEE	8160	3132	5028	2,000	2275	585	729	10,617	8905	1,712	47	80,464
GREENE	9300	3132	6168	2,000	2275	585	729	11,757	10059	1,698	44	74,712
HAMILTON	7704	3132	4572	2,000	2275	585	729	10,161	8137	2,024	9	18,216
HERKIMER	7356	3132	4224	2,000	2275	585	729	9,813	8137	1,676	40	67,040
JEFFERSON	10560	3132	7428	2,000	2275	585	729	13,017	9350	3,667	67	245,689
KINGS	20568	3132	17436	2,000	2616	673	793	23,518	18005	5,513	2,607	14,373,303
LEWIS	7872	3132	4740	2,000	2275	585	729	10,329	8337	1,992	53	105,576
LIVINGSTON	9300	3132	6168	2,000	2275	585	729	11,757	9309	2,448	40	97,920
MADISON	8676	3132	5544	2,000	2275	585	729	11,133	8337	2,796	32	89,472
MONROE	9300	3132	6168	2,000	2275	585	729	11,757	9309	2,448	561	1,373,328
MONTGOMERY	7968	3132	4836	2,000	2275	585	729	10,425	8337	2,088	40	83,520
NASSAU	19488	3132	16356	2,000	2616	673	793	22,438	17342	5,096	930	4,739,606
NEW YORK	20,568	3132	17436	2,000	2616	673	793	23,518	18005	5,513	1821	10,039,810
NIAGARA	8436	3132	5304	2,000	2275	585	729	10,893	9105	1,788	167	298,596
ONEIDA	7356	3132	4224	2,000	2275	585	729	9,813	8137	1,676	214	358,664
ONONDAGA	8676	3132	5544	2,000	2275	585	729	11,133	8337	2,796	334	933,864
ONTARIO	9300	3132	6168	2,000	2275	585	729	11,757	9309	2,448	77	188,496
ORANGE	13344	3132	10212	2,000	2275	585	729	15,801	13661	2,140	344	736,160
ORLEANS	9300	3132	6168	2,000	2275	585	729	11,757	9309	2,448	31	75,888
OSWEGO	8676	3132	5544	2,000	2275	585	729	11,133	8337	2,796	65	181,740
OTSEGO	8352	3132	5220	2,000	2275	585	729	10,809	8539	2,270	38	86,260
PUTNAM	20568	3132	17436	2,000	2616	673	793	23,518	16234	7,284	78	568,179
QUEENS	20568	3132	17436	2,000	2616	673	793	23,518	18005	5,513	2174	11,986,023
RENSSELAER	10260	3132	7128	2,000	2275	585	729	12,717	10259	2,458	135	331,830
RICHMOND	20568	3132	17436	2,000	2616	673	793	23,518	18005	5,513	777	4,283,873
ROCKLAND	20568	3132	17436	2,000	2616	673	793	23,518	16797	6,721	212	1,424,926
SARATOGA	10260	3132	7128	2,000	2275	585	729	12,717	10259	2,458	57	140,106
SCHENECTADY	10260	3132	7128	2,000	2275	585	729	12,717	10259	2,458	156	383,448
SCHOHARIE	10260	3132	7128	2,000	2275	585	729	12,717	10259	2,458	39	95,862
SCHUYLER	7440	3132	4308	2,000	2275	585	729	9,897	8725	1,172	12	14,064
SENECA	8220	3132	5088	2,000	2275	585	729	10,677	8905	1,772	37	65,564
ST.LAWRENCE	7980	3132	4848	2,000	2275	585	729	10,437	8337	2,100	102	214,200
STEUBEN	7692	3132	4560	2,000	2275	585	729	10,149	8725	1,424	127	180,848
SUFFOLK	19488	3132	16356	2,000	2616	673	793	22,438	17342	5,096	1588	8,093,004
SULLIVAN	9672	3132	6540	2,000	2275	585	729	12,129	10054	2,075	71	147,325
TIOGA	7608	3132	4476	2,000	2275	585	729	10,065	8725	1,340	27	36,180
TOMPKINS	11628	3132	8496	2,000	2275	585	729	14,085	10373	3,712	78	289,536
ULSTER	11604	3132	8472	2,000	2275	585	729	14,061	10822	3,239	172	557,108
WARREN	9048	3132	5916	2,000	2275	585	729	11,505	9854	1,651	57	94,107
WASHINGTON	9048	3132	5916	2,000	2275	585	729	11,505	9854	1,651	5	8,255
WAYNE	9300	3132	6168	2,000	2275	585	729	11,757	9309	2,448	80	195,840
WESTCHESTER	19692	3132	16560	2,000	2616	673	793	22,642	17396	5,246	957	5,020,757
WYOMING	6840	3132	3708	2,000	2275	585	729	9,297	8725	572	26	14,872
YATES	7728	3132	4596	2,000	2275	585	729	10,185	8905	1,280	14	17,920
											19,466	85,681,305

FUNDING EROSION IN OMH MENTAL HEALTH HOUSING DUE TO INFLATION 1991 to 2019

