



Patricia Loftman <cnm788@gmail.com>

**FW: [EXTERNAL] Psychiatric bed capacity: HANYS issues letter to OMH and DOH outlining obstacles-**

Patricia Loftman <cnm788@gmail.com>  
To: Patricia Loftman <cnm788@gmail.com>

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# Psychiatric bed capacity: HANYS issues letter to OMH and DOH outlining obstacles

HANYS sent a letter to OMH and DOH in support of increasing access to mental health services, but strongly urging the agencies to consider the major obstacles hospitals face.

DOH and the Office of Mental Health issued a directive requiring hospitals to re-open all non-operational, licensed inpatient psychiatric beds by Feb. 10 or submit a

plan to the agencies by Feb. 10 addressing how they will bring these beds online by April 1.

The directive is part of the state's comprehensive plan to expand mental health service capacity across the care continuum, which includes an increase of 1,000 inpatient psychiatric beds.

HANYS' letter to OMH and DOH, developed with input from HANYS' behavioral health taskforce, included the following considerations and obstacles to meeting the state's mandate:

- severe workforce shortages;
- soaring labor costs;
- Medicaid underpayments, particularly in managed care;
- the increase in patients boarding due to a lack of safe care options outside of the hospital and the lack of reimbursement for care during discharge delays;
- the need for capital investments to accommodate shifts in population served, e.g., increases in pediatric patients and those with co-occurring conditions;
- regulatory and administrative obstacles;
- local variation in the need for inpatient psychiatric care; and
- ongoing, intermittent COVID-19 surges, prompting the continued increase in demand for medical beds.