



CASAS

Consortium of Addiction Services and Supports
Finger Lakes/Region II

January 3, 2022

Testimony to the Office of the Attorney General

I am writing as the President of the Region II Consortium of Addiction Services and Supports. We are a long standing membership organization representing virtually every SUD provider in the Finger Lakes region including Prevention, Treatment, Harm Reduction and Recovery. This includes professional services that are community based, those provided in outpatient settings and those in all levels of residential care for substance affected individuals and families.

We have identified significant challenges and concerns related to two keys areas directly impacting the treatment and care of persons with substance use disorders and co-occurring mental health issues.

Access to care-

There are highly discriminatory differences in the ability to access services for working people who commonly have commercial insurance coverage due to high co-pays and high deductible plans. This is in stark contrast to people who are insured through Medicaid and managed care plans.

Parity with other medical conditions and between substance use services and mental health services-

There are great concerns that the reimbursement rates that are typically negotiated with commercial insurances have provided no increase in rates despite the extreme increases in the cost of delivering care. We are also noting that there are substantial differences in rates between mental health and substance use service reimbursement even when the services are the same. Further concerns are present in noting that the copays that consumers cannot pay are waived only through exorbitant administrative resources to demonstrate the need, and most organizations cannot absorb these costs.

Like so many others across the state we often struggle with dangerously thin staffing levels. Much of the more recent additional funding is now being allocated to the start of new programs while existing programs and services are not whole in so many ways. We have observed ARPA funds and opioid settlement funds being awarded to many of these new programs while best practice existing programs face closure.

Dr. Gary Horwitz from one of the providers in our Region plans to offer more specific information to your office through live testimony. We support Dr. Horwitz's advocacy and hope that these concerns can be addressed. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

*Craig Johnson LMHC, CASAC-G
Region II CASAS President
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