



New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc.

Executive Offices: 2697 Hamburg Street - Schenectady, NY 12303-3783 • (518) 355-3371 • FAX: (518) 356-5767
www.nychiefs.org E MAIL NYSACOP@nycap.rr.com

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To: U.S. House of Representatives

The New York State Association of Chiefs of Police (NYSACOP) represents over 550 police chiefs in New York State and strongly urges support for the mental health proposals of Rep. Tim Murphy. As our former President wrote:

Police and sheriffs are being overwhelmed "dealing with the unintended consequences of a polic change that in effect removed the daily care of our nation's severely mentally ill population from the medical community and placed it with the criminal justice system." ...This policy change has caused a spike in the frequency of arrests of severely mentally ill persons, prison and jail population and the homeless population...(and) has become a major consumer of law enforcement resources nationwide."¹

We believe Representative Murphy's proposals will help return care and treatment of the most seriously ill back to the mental health system. Two of Mr. Murphy's proposals are particularly important to law enforcement

Establish Assisted Outpatient Treatment Demonstration Projects

In New York, Assisted Outpatient Treatment (Kendra's Law) has benefitted for patients, public and police²

- 55% fewer recipients engaged in suicide attempts or physical harm to self
- 47% fewer physically harmed others
- 46% fewer damaged or destroyed property
- 43% fewer threatened physical harm to others.
- 74% fewer participants experienced homelessness
- 83% fewer experienced arrest
- 87% fewer experienced incarceration.
- 49% fewer abused alcohol
- 48% fewer abused drugs

Eliminate provisions in Medicaid that prevent hospitalization of persons with the most serious mental illnesses.

States do not have enough long-term hospital beds for the seriously mentally ill because the IMD Provision in Medicaid precludes reimbursement for long term hospital care for people with mental illness. As a result, local psychiatric hospital emergency rooms have become overcrowded putting admitting psychiatrists under intense pressure not to admit patients and to discharge those admitted sicker and quicker to free beds for new arrivals. Anyone well enough to walk in and ask for help, is generally not sick enough to be admitted. This makes involuntary admission — becoming a "danger to self or others" — the only path in. That's when our officers are called on to defuse the potentially dangerous situation and transport the mentally ill individuals to

psychiatric hospitals. We wait hours for psychiatrists to evaluate them, only to find the doctor overrules us and refuses to admit the patient. If the individual is admitted, they will generally be discharged prior to being fully stabilized or having effective community services put in place. The only solution for our officers is to take people with serious mental illness to jail, something we are loath to do to sick people who need help, not incarceration. Mr. Murphy's proposals will help increase the number of hospital beds available for the seriously mentally ill and thereby reduce incarceration, homelessness, suicide and other outcomes.

We urge SUPPORT for Rep. Murphy's proposals

Steven H. Heider
President

¹ Biasotti, Michael, Management of the Severely Mentally Ill and Its Effects on Homeland Security, Nava Postgraduate School

² N.Y. State Office of Mental Health "Kendra's Law: Final Report on the Status of Assisted Outpatient Treatment." March 2005