



New York State Campaign
For Mental Health Housing

**New York State Campaign for
Mental Health Housing Members**

- Association for Community Living
- Association for Rehabilitative Case Management and Housing
- Bowery Resident's Committee
- Brooklyn Community Housing and Services
- Catholic Charities of Cortland County
- Center for Urban Community Services
- Central New York Services, Inc.
- Coalition for the Homeless
- Coalition of Institutionalized Aged and Disabled
- Coalition of Voluntary Mental Health Agencies, Inc.
- Community Access
- Concern for Independent Living
- Corporation for Supportive Housing
- Council on Homeless Policies and Services
- Episcopal Church
- Family Residences and Essential Enterprises
- FECS
- Heritage Health & Housing
- Housing First!
- Human Development Services of Westchester
- Institute for Community Living
- Lawrence House
- League of Women Voters of New York State
- Loeb House
- Long Island Center for Independent Living
- Mental Health Association-Columbia-Greene
- Mental Health Association- Ulster County
- Mental Health Association of NYC
- Mental Health Association of NYS
- Mental Health Association of Westchester
- MFY Legal Services
- Mount Sinai - Elmhurst Hospital Center
- MTI Residential Services
- Multi-County Community Development Corporation
- National Alliance on Mental Illness for NYC-Metro
- National Alliance on Mental Illness for New York State
- New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services
- NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
- Occupations, Inc.
- Odyssey House
- Project Hospitality
- Project Renewal
- Rehabilitation Support Services
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- Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers
- SCAP, Inc.
- Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
- Services for the Underserved, Inc.
- Southern Tier Environments for Living
- Supportive Housing Network of New York
- Urban Justice Center
- Venture House
- West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing, Inc.

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Governor Pataki Urged to Sign Mental Health Housing Waiting List Bill

Albany, NY—August 8, 2006—Steve Coe, Chair of *New York State Campaign for Mental Health Housing* said the governor should build on positive measures New York has taken to address the housing needs of those with mental illnesses by signing Mental Health Waiting List Legislation into law (A-2895a). Coe said the bill calls for the state Office of Mental Health (OMH) to work with local communities on identifying and tracking the number of adults with serious mental illnesses who've applied and are waiting for housing, and to create a monthly statewide waiting list.

“Safe, affordable housing with support services like job training and counseling increases the chances for recovery from mental illnesses,” said Coe. “We’ve come a long way, but still have no means of tracking what works and assessing where resources should be targeted. The waiting list bill is the logical next step following initiatives like the NY/NY agreements that have helped expand housing options for homeless people with mental illnesses in New York City.”

“As a family member of a loved one with serious mental illness, I know just how important it is for such persons to have safe and affordable housing,” said David Seay, Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York State (NAMI-NYS). “There is no way a person can achieve any significant degree of recovery from serious mental illness if they do not have a proper place to live – housing is the prerequisite to recovery and a centralized waiting list is essential to the effort to obtain housing.”

Gary Levin, a part-time organizer with the Coalition of Institutionalized Aged and Disabled, and a resident at Ocean House adult home in Far Rockaway said that a Statewide Mental Health Housing Waiting List is badly needed. “Too many people, myself included, are capable of living independently, but instead are shuffled from adult home to adult home, or even forced to live on the streets because there is no mechanism in place for tracking available housing and matching it with people’s needs. Without a statewide waiting list, it’s virtually impossible to make living arrangements in supportive housing that provides a chance for recovery.”

“I know that a statewide waiting list would have made a big difference for me,” said Shavon Jackson, a Youth Organizer for the Mental Health Association of New York City who waited two years for supportive housing. “Too many people like me are needlessly bounced from multiple waiting lists and from Group Home to Group Home when they could be living independently. The governor should sign this bill into law.”

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Senator Thomas P. Morahan, a co-sponsor of the legislation said, “a Mental Health Housing Waiting List will provide the state with a critical tool that hasn’t been available in over ten years. Without a means of tracking the housing need and assessing the types of housing available and requirements of the people waiting to be placed, we are forced to take a shot in the dark when planning now and for the future. I am optimistic the governor will see the merit of this bill and sign it into law. It’s just good policy.”

Assemblyman Peter M. Rivera, who authored the bill in the Assembly, said that care was taken to give OMH discretion over how the data is collected, organized, and published, and that the bill has garnered widespread support. “This is a solid piece of legislation aimed at doing the right and compassionate thing for people with mental illnesses. I’m proud that the bill has a long list of supporters, including the Mayor of New York City and the New York State Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors.”

Coe said that the governor received the Mental Health Housing Waiting List bill on Friday, August 4th and has ten days to act on the legislation. “We feel confident that the governor will make the right choice and sign this common-sense legislation and give people with mental illnesses hope for the future and the state the planning tools it needs.”

The New York State Campaign for Mental Health Housing is a bi-partisan, broad-based coalition of over 60 organizations representing mental health providers, consumers, family members, advocates, housing developers, social policy experts, legal rights organizations and concerned citizens whose goal is to address the housing needs of people with serious mental illnesses.

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