

**Statement by Glenn Liebman, CEO Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.**

“Our organization is very concerned that the State has proposed the elimination of the ‘prescriber prevails’ provision of the Health Department Budget. This is a significant protection that was passed in last year’s budget. It allows for the prescriber, in consultation with the patient, to have final say on medication usage for their mental health medication. This decision should not be left to health plans. In these difficult times, we must have strong protections for people with psychiatric disabilities. We urge the Governor in the 21 day amendments to include the provision that will again allow for ‘prescriber prevails’ for atypical antipsychotics.”

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**Gay Men’s Health Crisis Opposes Budget Repeal of Medicaid Prescriber Prevails for Antipsychotic Medications**

*Group Calls on Governor Cuomo to Rescind Proposal During Budget Amendment Period  
A Statement from GMHC COO Janet Weinberg*

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Gay Men’s Health Crisis is stunned to learn of the Governor’s decision to repeal a newly-implemented policy that helps to ensure appropriate prescription drug access to low-income persons with severe mental illness. Many of our clients are dually diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and mental illness. We know, first hand, the inherent difficulty of balancing drug regimens to best treat our clients’ significant needs. We fully support the ability of clinicians to make these decisions in the Medicaid program.

The Governor’s decision is especially perplexing given the actions taken by him and the legislature last week to help prevent the repetition of recent tragedies involving guns and mental illness. This is the exact wrong time for New York to switch course and restrict access to antipsychotic medications.

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**Statement by Anna Lamb, President New York State Osteopathic Medical Society**

“Physicians—not insurance companies—are qualified to prescribe the medications they feel are best for Medicaid patients requiring atypical antipsychotics. Physicians get at least seven years of medical education, which includes five years of clinical experience. They are trained to help patients manage their diseases. By allowing managed care insurance companies to overrule physicians’ treatment decisions, the New York State Budget eliminates their ability to ensure that their patients effectively manage their health, including their mental health. Until we stop choosing to save money at all costs, patients and society overall will suffer. Governor Cuomo must not tie the hands of doctors and instead fulfill his promise to increase access to mental health treatments.”

Anna Lamb, D.O.  
President, New York State Osteopathic Medical Society  
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**Statement by Carmen Collado, President Association of Hispanic Mental Health Professionals**

“As healthcare providers to those living with mental illness, we know that patients need medications tailored to their specific conditions and needs. We thought that we had a partner in New York State to provide the best care possible for mental health challenges. Decisions on which mental health medications are the most appropriate to treat an individual’s mental illness should be decided by a doctor and the patient - not the government and not a managed care plan. Now that the New York State Budget eliminates a doctor's ability to prescribe the best atypical antipsychotic medication for an individual, we know that New York is leading patients and providers down a dangerous path. With the stress caused by Hurricane Sandy, and the tragic events in Newtown and Webster, Governor Cuomo needs to show that he is committed to mental health care and resolve this immediately.”

Carmen Collado, LCSW-R

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