



July 10, 2025

Honorable [Name]
[Street]
[Room]
Albany, NY [ZIP]

Dear [Title] [Name],

As county governments, residential and community-based service providers, and health care systems, we write in support of A.7603/S.7978. This bill is essential for New York children who have unmet, multi-system health needs and especially children who are left “boarding” in hospital inpatient units and emergency departments after they are medically cleared for discharge because residential and community-based services are not available and/or state agencies cannot agree on who should pay for their care.

Without the solutions contained in the bill, an estimated 200+ New York children will experience unnecessary hospital stays each year totaling an estimated 20,440 in-patient days and 1,632 days in emergency departments. These cases result in immeasurable emotional costs to children and their families, exacerbate overcrowding in our hospital systems, and costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year.

When enacted, the bill will:

- Require that upon referral of a child to the Council on Children and Families Interagency Resolution Unit, an **evaluation and diagnostic study** be completed within 72 hours and **placement or services** effectuated within 5 business days of the evaluation
- Create a **confidential, online data portal** to help state, local and voluntary agencies coordinate residential and community-based services
- Require **regular reports to the Governor and legislature** on the status of children boarding in hospitals
- Fund the **Council on Children and Families** to facilitate multi-system care coordination

The cost of these actions is far less than what New York is already paying:

- A hospital survey done by the Healthcare Association of New York State found medical costs of **\$167 million in a single 3-month period** due to New Yorkers with complex needs being hospitalized in-patient beyond what was medically necessary. These delayed discharges also have indirect costs due to exacerbating shortages in hospital beds, unnecessarily disrupting the lives of children and their families, and thwarting children's healthy development.
- In 2023, 249 children were sent to out-of-state residential programs because there was no program available in New York. A current case of out-of-state care is costing a county in western New York **\$455,606 per year for the care and education of one child**. This cost is typical for out-of-state care, yielding an **estimated annual statewide cost of \$113.4 million**.
- Our child welfare system is also experiencing unprecedented impacts. In Monroe County, the number of **youth in child welfare with significant cross-system needs rose over 74% in only two years**. Visits to the hospital by youth in child welfare rose 61%. Even when their needs are known, services are often not available. In Monroe County, 64% of youth in the child welfare system who are eligible for OPWDD services and 57% eligible for OMH services were not able to access them.

The solutions in A.7603/S.7978 are critical to ensuring that every New York child receives the care they need, when and where they need it. By removing systemic barriers, supporting service coordination, and shedding light through data, this legislation will support a more efficient, coordinated and responsive way of caring for New York's most vulnerable children.

Sincerely,

As One Healthcare IPA
AutismUp
Bronx Developmental Disabilities Council
Center for Youth
Children's Health Home of Upstate New York
Children's Home of Wyoming Conference
Collaborative for Children and Families
Coordinated Care Services, Inc.
Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies
Developmental Disabilities Alliance of Western New York
Education Success Foundation
EnCompass: Resources for Learning
Families Together in New York State
Family Counseling Service of the Finger Lakes
Genesee County Department of Social Services
Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing at St. John Fisher University
Hillside
IGHL – Independent Group Home Living Program

JCCA
Inter Agency Council
Lifespire
Mary Cariola Center
Monroe County Department of Human Services
Mount Hope Family Center
NY Public Welfare Association
NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health
Pathways, Inc.
Rising Ground
Rochester Regional Health
Society for the Protection and Care of Children
Together for Youth
University of Rochester Medical Center
Wayne County Department of Social Services
Wyoming County Department of Social Services
Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.