



February 10, 2026

[Title] [Name]

[Address]

Albany, NY [ZIP]

Dear [Name],

As county governments, health care systems, and residential and community-based service providers serving children and families in 47 counties and statewide, we write in support of investing \$25 million in the state budget to allow the Council on Children and Family Services to build the necessary infrastructure and accountability so children with complex needs are not left languishing in hospitals past the time they medically need to be there.

An estimated 200+ New York children with cross-system needs (including medical, mental health, behavioral health, and developmental delays) experience unnecessary hospital stays each year after the time they are medically cleared for discharge. These delays are not a matter of a few extra days, but weeks and months of being isolated from family and peers, with no access to outside space or play settings, no normal daily routines, and disrupted education. Totalling an estimated 20,440 in-patient days and 1,632 days in emergency departments, these extended stays cost our health systems, taxpayers and families far more than the \$25 million we are asking for:

- 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, children and adults, being hospitalized in-patient beyond the time medically necessary.
- 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 hospital systems experience further financial burdens due to **lost bed space**. It is not only a matter of the individual child occupying a bed they no longer medically need. Because of safety and supervision, hospitals often must shut down an entire multi-bed area to accommodate a single child. This compounds the hospital bed shortage, decreases the public's access to care, and results in lost revenue for hospitals.
- County governments also bear high costs when hospitals discharge children to the county's care with no ability to return the child home and no residential facility available. **Child welfare staff have had to house children in county conference rooms, hotel rooms, and short-term rentals** with two staff providing round-the-clock care and supervision until a suitable placement can be found.

The \$25 million investment we are asking for is far less than what hospitals and our child welfare system are already paying. More importantly, the investment will support:

- **Rapid evaluation and diagnostic studies** upon referral of a child to the Council on Children and Families Interagency Resolution Unit to determine what services will allow the child to safely and successfully return home or to an appropriate residential placement in or near their own community
- Creation of a **confidential, online data portal** to help state, local and voluntary agencies coordinate residential and community-based services
- Effective **multi-system care coordination** by the Council on Children and Families
- **Regular reports** to the Governor and legislature on the status of children boarding in hospitals so we have an accurate and detailed picture that informs further effective, efficient solutions

This \$25 million investment in the Council on Children and Family Services will support a more efficient, coordinated and responsive way of caring for New York's most vulnerable children.

Sincerely,

As One Healthcare IPA
AutisumUp
Center for Youth
Child and Family Services of Erie County
Children's Health Home of Upstate New York
Children's Home of Wyoming Conference
Coordinate Care Services, Inc.
Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies
Developmental Disabilities Alliance of Western New York
Education Success Foundation
EnCompass: Resources for Learning
Family Counseling Service of the Finger Lakes
Genesee County Department of Social Services

Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing
Hillside
Inter Agency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies
Lifespire
Mary Cariola Center
Monroe County Department of Human Services
New York Public Welfare Association
New York State Association for Behavioral Analysis
NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health
Ontario County Department of Social Services
Rochester Regional Health
Schuyler County Department of Social Services
Together for Youth
University of Rochester
Wyoming County Department of Social Services
Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.

Together we serve children and families in 47 counties:

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Chenango • Clinton • Columbia • Cortland • Delaware • Dutchess • Erie • Essex • Franklin •
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• Wayne • Westchester • Wyoming • Yates

Plus represent 5 statewide service providers and organizations