

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVOCATES, HOSPITALS AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS URGE GOV. HOCHUL TO SIGN COMPLEX
NEEDS LEGISLATION**

Letter signed by 65 organizations calls on Governor Hochul to sign legislation sponsored by Assemblymember Andrew Hevesi and Senator Samra Brouk strengthening cross-agency coordination for children who struggle to access appropriate care

To read the letter, [click here](#)

Albany, NY (September 23, 2026) – Today, the [New York State Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health](#), joined by a broad coalition of 65 children's service providers, hospital and health systems, local governments, disability organizations and other advocates, sent a letter to Governor Kathy Hochul urging her to sign [S.7978A/A.7603B](#), legislation sponsored by Senator Samra Brouk and Assemblymember Andrew Hevesi to improve care and coordination for children with complex needs. The legislation unanimously passed both houses of the State Legislature in June and would strengthen the Council on Children and Families' ability to coordinate services across state agencies and collect data on service needs and capacity for children with complex needs.

The letter outlines how children with complex behavioral health needs frequently require services spanning multiple state systems, but fragmented eligibility requirements and funding, and poor coordination can leave families struggling to access appropriate care. In some cases, children remain in hospitals for weeks or months after they have been medically cleared for discharge because an appropriate placement or combination of services cannot be arranged.

Approximately 200 New York children with unmet multisystem needs experience unnecessary hospital discharge delays each year, accounting for roughly 20,440 inpatient days and another 1,632 days in emergency departments.

"When a child is ready to leave the hospital but remains there for weeks or months because our systems cannot agree on who is responsible for their care, that is a failure we have the ability to fix," said **Kayleigh Zaloga, President and CEO of the New York State Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health**. "This legislation builds on an existing state structure and gives it stronger tools to bring agencies together, resolve disputes and help children get to the appropriate level of care in a timely manner. The extraordinary breadth of organizations supporting this bill – from counties and hospitals to behavioral health, child welfare and disability service providers – reflects how urgently this problem is being felt across New York."

The letter describes how children experiencing discharge delays can be isolated from family and peers and go without normal routines, education and appropriate treatment, while hospitals lose beds needed for patients requiring acute medical care. Counties can also be left scrambling to care for children who cannot safely return home and have nowhere appropriate to go, at times requiring social services staff to supervise children around the clock in temporary settings.

The organizations also point to the financial consequences. A Healthcare Association of New York State survey cited in the letter found **\$167 million in medical costs over a three-month period** associated with patients with complex needs remaining hospitalized beyond the point of medical necessity. The letter also notes that 321 children were sent to out-of-state residential programs in 2024 because appropriate programs were unavailable in New York.

S.7978A/A.7603B would strengthen the **Council on Children and Families' Interagency Resolution Unit**, which coordinates services for children whose needs cross multiple state systems. The legislation would require timely evaluations and treatment, strengthen multi-system care coordination, create a confidential data portal to help agencies coordinate services, and require regular reporting on complex-needs cases and outcomes.

These reforms would help children access appropriate care closer to home while reducing unnecessary hospital stays, out-of-state placements and other costly consequences of fragmented care.

The letter also notes that the legislation would complement New York's obligations under the *C.K. v. McDonald* settlement to improve access to community-based behavioral health services for Medicaid-eligible children.

[The full letter is available here.](#)

See below for a full list of signers:

- New York State Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) NY Chapter 1
- Abilities First, Inc.
- ADAPT Community Network
- Astor Services
- AutismUp, Inc.
- AVSP, Inc.
- BestSelf Behavioral Health
- Bronx Developmental Disabilities Council
- Bronx Family Support Services Advisory Council
- Camelot of S.I. Inc.
- Cardinal McCloskey Community Services
- Catholic Charities of Broome County
- Child and Family Services of Erie County
- The Child Center of NY
- Children's Health Home of Upstate New York
- Children's Home of Jefferson County
- Children's Home of Poughkeepsie

- Children's Home of Wyoming Conference
- City of Rochester
- Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA)
- Education Success Foundation
- Empowering People's Independence
- EnCompass: Resources for Learning
- Genesee County Department of Social Services
- Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability, St. John Fisher University Nursing
- The GRACE Foundation of New York
- Hillside
- HUGS, Inc.
- IGHL
- INCLUDEnyc
- Integrated Community Alternatives Network (ICAN)
- Inter Agency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies, Inc.
- JCCA
- The Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services
- Lifespire
- Manhattan Mothers & Others
- Mary Cariola Center
- Modest Community Services Association
- Mohawk Opportunities, Inc.
- Monroe County Department of Human Services
- New York Public Welfare Association
- New York State American Academy of Pediatrics
- New York State Association for Behavior Analysis
- The New York Foundling
- Ontario County Department of Social Services
- Person Centered Services
- Rochester Regional Health
- Samaritan Daytop Village, Inc.
- Schuyler County Department of Social Services
- SCO Family of Services
- St. Catherine's Center for Children
- SteppingStone Day School
- Steuben County Department of Social Services
- Student Assistance Services Corporation
- SUNY Upstate Bioethics and Humanities Center
- SUNY Upstate Medical Center and Golisano Children's Hospital
- The Children's Agenda
- Together for Youth
- University of Rochester
- Villa of Hope
- Volunteers of America-Greater New York
- WellLife Network Inc.
- Wyoming County DSS
- Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.

About the Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health

The New York State Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health (CCBH) is the voice for children, families, and service providers in New York's children's behavioral healthcare continuum. The Coalition represents 50 nonprofit provider agencies that collectively provide residential and community-based services to nearly 200,000 youth per year and employ over 21,000 staff. The Coalition works collaboratively with families, state government, and advocates to secure funding and implement policies that best serve the needs of children and families who need all levels of behavioral health support.

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