



For Immediate Release

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**Governor Pataki and Commissioner, Dr. Sharon Carpinello Propose an Historic Comprehensive Mental Health Plan to Address the Needs of New York's Children:
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York and the Coalition of Voluntary Mental Health Agencies Applaud**

Governor Pataki proposed a comprehensive mental health plan for children in his 2006-07 Budget Address today. According to national estimates, one in five children and adolescents have a mental health disorder and at least one in ten – or as many as six million children – suffer from a serious emotional disturbance that severely disrupts daily functioning at home, in school, or in the community. However, in any given year fewer than 20% of these children receive needed mental health services. “The Governor’s and the Commissioner’s proposal ensures that communities throughout New York State can identify, link and treat children and for the first time, meet the overwhelming demand for outpatient treatment services,” said Gail B. Nayowith, Executive Director for Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York.

“For the first time, New York State will make it possible to move children’s mental health services from hospitals and offices to the community—early childhood programs, schools, community centers, foster care agencies and other places where children and families find themselves,” said Phillip A. Saperia, Executive Director for the Coalition of Mental Health Agencies.

“The proposal offers substantial benefits that will reduce crises and problems attributed to mental illness and improve their lives,” said Ms. Nayowith. Specifically, the resources dedicated in the Governor’s budget will: improve children’s functioning; reduce psychiatric symptoms and problematic behaviors; reduce reliance on crisis services; and improve access to quality treatment.

Mental health experts are also supportive of the plan. “The proposal calls for treatment and support services that are effective, elevate practice and improve the availability of quality in children’s mental health care overall,” said Mr. Saperia.

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For over six decades, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC) has convened, informed and mobilized New Yorkers to make the city a better place for children.