



Friends of Recovery – New York 2017 Addiction Recovery Policy Statement

Friends of Recovery – New York (FOR-NY) is a state-wide Recovery Community Organization (RCO) working on behalf of millions of individuals and families in New York to educate decision makers and the general public about recovery from addiction. We are dedicated to eliminating stigma, ending discrimination and removing barriers to recovery including those that exist in treatment, housing, and employment; and we support the expansion of recovery support services for individuals and families. We call on the Governor and the NYS Legislature to take the following immediate actions to address the urgent addiction crisis in New York State:

INSURANCE PARITY ENFORCED WITH EXPANDED ACCESS TO ADDICTION TREATMENT

Although the Federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) was signed into law in 2008, the Affordable Care Act in 2010, and other access to treatment protections were codified in NY State in 2014 and 2016, individuals and families across New York State are still being denied life-saving addiction treatment because the laws are still not fully implemented or being enforced adequately. We urge the Governor and the NYS Legislature to work together to enforce insurance and parity laws in New York, and hold insurance companies accountable to the new laws, requiring unfettered access to 14 days of initial inpatient treatment. In addition, we call for increased funding for addiction treatment and recovery support services so that individuals receive care that is accessible, accountable, efficient, equitable, sustained and of the highest quality.

Treatment on Demand - It is unconscionable that individuals must wait days and even weeks on average before they can access sorely needed treatment. Insurers, providers, state and county government units must all work together with recovery community organizations to ensure that immediate access to treatment becomes the norm rather than the exception. Anyone in need, must have access to treatment on par with access for all other medical conditions upon request. To that end, all hospitals must be required to admit any individual into any available bed when presenting with a need for medically supervised withdrawal or stabilization services related to substance use disorder. These admissions are necessary to ensure safe, humane treatment and equal access to a hospital bed as with any other presenting, urgent, medical condition.

ADDICTION & RECOVERY SAFEGUARDS

Certification of Recovery Housing - We support a standardized certification of recovery housing. Individuals in early recovery must be protected and afforded a safe and supportive living environment. Regulations and supervision must be adopted within the parameters of the Federal Fair Housing Act in a manner that promotes integrity, ensures continuous quality improvement, upholds residents' rights, are recovery-oriented, and conducive to optimum health and well-being. Certified Recovery Housing must also be supportive of individuals who use medication to help sustain their recovery.

Expand the Role of Peers for Individuals and Families – We support increased training to help peers access the education and training needed for certification and the expansion of employment opportunities for recovery coaches, peer advocates and family support navigators in all phases of the addiction to recovery continuum of care including: crisis centers, detox units, inpatient rehabilitation, outpatient treatment, and community residences, as well as in supportive housing and at other recovery support service access points. Peers must be integrated at key points of contact in communities throughout the state.



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ADDICTION & RECOVERY SAFEGUARDS (CONTINUED)

Establishment of Recovery High Schools and Recovery Collegiate Programs – We support the creation of secondary schools and collegiate programs designed specifically for students in recovery from addiction. Each school would educate students in recovery from addiction and co-occurring disorders, meet Department of Education standards for awarding secondary and higher education diplomas, and support students in developing a strong recovery foundation.

The effectiveness of recovery high schools in minimizing relapse and improving graduation rates is well documented and must be considered as we take a broad approach to combating addiction and preventing relapse in younger populations.

Evaluation, Assessment and Referral after Overdose Reversal - We support the creation of proactive interventions to assist those in crisis after receiving emergency Naloxone to reverse an opiate overdose. In most instances, no treatment intervention occurs (or any referral at all) and there are numerous reports of additional overdoses and in some cases, even death. Mechanisms for evaluation, in depth assessment, treatment referrals and *warm handoffs* to recovery coaches or peer advocates with access to other supports must be offered, implemented and made immediately available to help save lives. We support the implementation and expansion of the current peer engagement initiatives.

Treatment Regulations for People on Buprenorphine - We support enactment of regulations requiring concurrent counseling/treatment with the use of buprenorphine. Evidence-based research supports the critical need for people receiving Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) to have corresponding therapeutic support. A simple recommendation for addiction treatment as an adjunct to buprenorphine has proven insufficient therefore regulations must be adopted.

Improve Outcomes for Those in Treatment and Recovery with Current or Former Criminal Justice Involvement - We support the removal of barriers that make it difficult for individuals with criminal records to access treatment, sustain recovery and have the same access to housing, employment, healthcare, and education as other New Yorkers.

Asset Forfeiture Funds - We recommend that all asset forfeiture funds in the Chemical Dependence Service Fund (Section 97-W/State Finance Law) be allocated to OASAS and invested in the expansion of prevention, treatment, and recovery services. These funds should be dedicated for their intended purposes as described.

Opioid Addiction Treatment and Recovery Fee – We recommend a one cent fee on each milligram of an active opioid ingredient in pain medication. Money from this “permanent funding stream” would be used to provide and expand access to addiction treatment and recovery support services.



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MISSION

Friends of Recovery – New York (FOR-NY) is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization with a mission to demonstrate the power and promise of Recovery from alcohol and drug addiction, and the value that Recovery provides individuals, families, and entire communities throughout New York State.

VISION

Friends of Recovery – New York envisions a world in which recovery from addiction is not only common, but celebrated; a world in which the entire spectrum of effective prevention, treatment and recovery support services are available and accessible to all.

CORE BELIEFS

- ❖ Addiction is a public health issue
- ❖ Recovery is possible for everyone
- ❖ There are many paths to recovery and everyone gets there in his or her own way
- ❖ Adequate resources and support are necessary for sustained recovery
- ❖ Recovery is about reclaiming a meaningful life and role in society

POLICY FOCUS

- ❖ Respond to illicit drug use as a health issue, rather than a crime
- ❖ Eliminate barriers to getting help
- ❖ Develop non-punitive, non-judgmental recovery service models
- ❖ Create a system that supports long-term recovery
- ❖ Address the needs of families living with someone suffering from alcohol and/or drug addiction
- ❖ Start local Recovery Community Organizations (RCO's) throughout New York State
- ❖ Open Recovery Community Centers (RCC's) across New York State
- ❖ Stop investing in the PROBLEM (Active Addiction) and start investing in the SOLUTION (Prevention, Treatment and Recovery)



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As part of our ongoing commitment to demonstrate the power and promise of recovery, FOR-NY is working to deliver the following programs, workshops and toolkits to communities throughout New York State:

COMMUNITY-BASED

- ❖ Technical Assistance: Support of local Recovery Community Organizations (RCO's)
- ❖ Film Screenings and Q&A - "The Anonymous People"
- ❖ Family Recovery Forums
- ❖ Family to Family Toolkits
- ❖ Recovery Community Organization (RCO) Toolkit
- ❖ Recovery Talks - Community Listening Forums
- ❖ Training: "Our Stories Have Power" messaging workshop
- ❖ Training: "The Science of Addiction and Recovery"
- ❖ Training: "Supervision for Recovery Coaches"

STATEWIDE

- ❖ Statewide Recovery Needs Survey
- ❖ Establishment of NY CARES- Council on Addiction Recovery, Education and Support
- ❖ Statewide "Community-Based Recovery Supports" Meetings
- ❖ Annual New York Recovery Conference
- ❖ If you have questions about any of these programs or want to become involved, please don't hesitate to contact us at 518-487-4395.

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