



1529 Western Avenue  
Albany, New York  
12203  
518-487-4395  
www.FOR-NY.ORG

**BOARD of DIRECTORS**  
**Joseph Turner, President**  
*New York City*

**Debra Rhoades, Vice President**  
*Albany County*

**Chacku Mathai, Treasurer**  
*Monroe County*

**Donna Pagan, Secretary**  
*New York City*

**Laurie Lieberman**  
*New York City*

**Eric Dyer**  
*Albany County*

**Ed Olsen**  
*Nassau & Suffolk County*

**STAFF:**

**Stephanie Campbell**  
Executive Director

**Debbie Brosen**  
Office Manager

**Theresa Knorr**  
Director of Education &  
Training

**Allison Weingarten**  
Director of Policy

**Shana Kaplanov**  
Development &  
Communications Manager

June 8, 2018

Dear Senator/Assembly Member:

Friends of Recovery – New York (FOR-NY) strongly supports A3694-C/S1156-C, the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Report Act. This legislation would require insurers and health plans to submit data and key metrics on compliance with parity laws.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 3,600 New Yorkers died of a drug overdose in 2016 and that number is rising. In the midst of this epidemic, it is more important than ever that patients with a substance use or mental health disorder be able to access the care that they need in order to become and stay healthy. Despite changes made to state and federal parity laws, far too many individuals are being denied the life-saving care they need. This legislation will help to identify where those violations are occurring, thereby bringing New York closer to achieving true parity.

The FY2019 Budget included language that would create an ombudsman to help consumers “ensure that they receive appropriate health insurance coverage.” The proposed legislation would continue with that effort to help consumers get the help that they need.

A3694-C/S1156-C would require the Superintendent of Financial Services to collect and publish key data from insurers and health plans regarding their coverage for addiction and mental health care in a number of areas, including:

- Rates of utilization review;
- Rates of adverse determinations;
- Percentage of claims paid for in-network and out-of-network for mental health and substance use disorder care and treatment;
- Percentage of providers who remained in network; and
- Evaluation of network adequacy.

Not only will this information allow the government to ensure that insurers and health plans are in compliance with parity laws, it will enable consumers to make informed decisions regarding insurance options, to select the plan that will best suit their needs.

Friends of Recovery – New York strongly supports this piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Campbell, FOR-NY Executive Director