



NJAMHAA

New Jersey Association of Mental
Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.



Innovating for Progress
Partnering for Solutions

December 2, 2025

FY 2026

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The Honorable Sarah Adelman
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Human Services
P.O. Box 700
Trenton, NJ 08625-0700

Dear Commissioner Adelman,

Thank you for this opportunity to share the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies' (NJAMHAA's) recommendations for the FY2027 State Budget. Mental health and substance use treatment, support and recovery services provide positive outcomes for those served and also for the State's bottom line. Budgets reflect what is valued. It is time for New Jersey's budget to show that it truly does value individuals in need by investing significantly to sustain and expand the critical, life-altering and life-saving services delivered by providers of mental health, substance use and recovery and support services.

Behavioral health programs across the continuum of care are in dire straits, with many facing decisions about reductions or closure. Providers just cannot continue to fill the fiscal gaps left by inadequate reimbursement, and they certainly cannot maintain a qualified workforce with current rates and contract levels.

The items we recommend that would support the workforce – recruitment and retention bonuses, significant funding for the behavioral health loan redemption program and incentives for field placements – are requested because they are critically needed to sustain even the current levels of staffing, let alone a more adequate one. And the across-the-board increase on rates, including capturing the children's partial hospital rate that is most definitely threatening program closures, is similarly a need that absolutely must be met to keep the current network in place.

Individuals who are fortunate enough to access timely, appropriate mental health and/or substance use treatment and recovery and support services are given the opportunity to thrive. There are, unfortunately, too many who are unable to access them.

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NJAMHAA makes the following recommendations for the FY2027 budget to stabilize and strengthen the workforce, facilities and programs so that individuals have access to services when needed:

- Invest \$54 million (state funds that will draw down a \$21 million federal match) in rates and contracts to enable providers to offer wages that are more competitive.
- Invest \$3.2 million to increase the Children's Partial Hospital rate to \$115 per hour.
- Invest \$8 million for recruitment and retention bonuses for behavioral health staff.
- Invest an additional \$4,175,000 to bring the behavioral health loan redemption program budget to \$8 million.
- Invest \$5 million in incentives for behavioral health organizations to become field placement sites and provide clinical supervision of interns.
- Provide \$20 million as an initial capital investment into facilities so behavioral health providers can further develop integrated care and do necessary repairs and improvements.

Amidst the many competing requests you will receive, those we have laid out for behavioral health reflect the desperate needs of a system that provides life-altering and life-saving services – we hope New Jersey values them as much as those who are in need of them do.

Thank you for considering our recommendations and for your continuing efforts to ensure access to high-quality mental health, substance use treatment and recovery and supportive services for all New Jerseyans.

Sincerely,

Debra L. Wentz, Ph.D.
President and CEO