

Advocates Laud Inclusion of Critical Children's Behavioral Health Care Recommendations in Budget, Yet Warn That NY State Medicaid Cuts Will Have Far Reaching Negative Impact on Children & Families

*Children's Mental Health Challenges Connected to COVID-19
Will Mean Growing Need for Behavioral Treatment Services*

ALBANY, NY — Governor Cuomo and State Legislators have reached a budget deal that incorporates crucial recommendations from the Medicaid Redesign Team (MRTII) that are designed to improve access to behavioral health care for children and families. However, the budget also includes millions in devastating cuts to Medicaid. Funding for children's behavioral health services are critically important, but advocates say it may not be nearly enough in the face of the current pandemic. COVID-19 having far-reaching impacts on the health and wellbeing of New Yorkers, and Medicaid cuts threaten to draw the State deeper into crisis.

The [Campaign for Healthy Minds, Healthy Kids](#) issued the following statement in response:

"New York State is facing a children's mental health crisis, which is getting worse each day in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, the State Budget adopts the MRT II's recommendations to increase access to new children's behavioral health services, including crisis intervention, family peer supports, and community psychiatric supports. These services are designed to help the state better address the behavioral health needs of children and families. Sadly, these essential steps forward may not be nearly enough given the pandemic we are facing, as children face new mental health challenges resulting from isolation, economic insecurity, and heightened child welfare risk. The trauma and mental health challenges stemming from COVID-19 pose an unforeseen danger to children's mental health and wellbeing.

Even prior to this global crisis, more than half of New York children with a behavioral health condition were unable to get the care they needed. COVID-19 will only exacerbate that reality -- especially as hospitals and medical professionals struggle to keep up with the immediate crisis and face a profound blow from the deep Medicaid cuts of this budget.

It is critical that we do better and that we work together to ensure children and families can access the care they need and are legally entitled during this crisis and in the years to come."

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ABOUT

[The Campaign for Healthy Minds, Healthy Kids](#) is a statewide coalition of behavioral health providers, advocates, and New York families, joining together to create the public and political will necessary to ensure all children and adolescents in New York receive the high-quality behavioral health services they need. **You can view their platform with additional background information [here](#).**