

*The Families Together 2025 Policy Agenda is created by families and young people with social, emotional, behavioral and cross-systems challenges.*

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**This is a youth behavioral health crisis. Families need a workforce, not waitlists.**

Families Together in New York State (FTNYS) represents a statewide network of families and young people with lived experience in systems such as mental health, addiction, child welfare, juvenile justice, developmental disability, education, and social services.

FTNYS believes the proposals outlined in this document are crucial and urgent investments toward youth mental health. We urge the state to fund them by any means necessary- be it new tax revenue, reinvestment, or funds recovered from managed care organizations.

We want to see the following investments for behavioral health services in the FY 2026 enacted budget:

- Add an additional \$5.5 million in flexible State Aid to Localities funds under program code 1650 for Family and Youth Peer Support Services to provide unrestricted support for families and young people, regardless of their insurance status.
- Raise reimbursement rates across peer support services by aligning peer support reimbursement rates across all settings, including CFTSS, with the 150% rate increase provided to clinical settings under the Mental Health Outpatient Treatment and Rehabilitative Services (MHOTRS) Program.
- Require commercial insurers to make the same broad range of services currently available to children, youth, and families with Medicaid insurance available to New Yorkers with commercial coverage. This includes Child and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS) and Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS).
- Add \$195M to rates for outpatient clinics, CFTSS and HCBS youth mental health services for children under Medicaid and CHP to expand access to 26,000 additional children, youth and families.
- Add a 7.8% increase to rates and contracts for mental health and substance use disorder programs which includes a 2.9% CPI increase (July, 2024) and the difference between human services COLA's of the past three years (12.2%) and the CPI increases (17.1%) over that same period.
- Carve behavioral health (mental health and substance use disorder) services out of the state's Medicaid managed care program and in doing so, restore the availability of essential services to some of our most vulnerable residents via reinvestment.