

MEDIA ADVISORY



MEDIA CONTACT:

Eugene White
Northern Rivers Family of Services
518.701.4927 (cell)
Eugene.White@northernrivers.org

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NORTHERN RIVERS RESPONSE TO STATE OF THE STATE

ALBANY, NY — Northern Rivers Family of Services CEO William T. Gettman Jr. has issued the following response to Governor Hochul's State of the State address:

Governor Hochul's State of the State address serves as a statement of the administration's values and priorities for the upcoming year. For those of us with boots on the ground in service to some of New York's most vulnerable residents, it shows us the priorities of our leadership, and demonstrates the challenges we will face in the year ahead.

Our first reactions to this year's initial legislative roadmap are as follows:

Where is child welfare? Once again, the vitally important programs that protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect were left unacknowledged in this statement of values. The workforce that showed up in-person every day during the darkest moments of the pandemic to provide 24/7/365 care and protection to children is every bit as valuable and important to public health as other workers lauded for their bravery and heroism; yet this entire sector continues to be separated from other human services like mental health and healthcare when it comes time for adequate funding and respect.

Who fulfills the mental health promise? An investment of \$1 billion in our mental health system is an important step for all New Yorkers. But left unsaid is who'll provide these life-changing services? Programs only work when they have a trained, experienced, stable workforce to implement and deliver them. In a sector battered by an unprecedented workforce crisis, where is the support to attract people to the field, compensate them fairly, and encourage them to stay in jobs where they make a difference?

What is the best way to fight poverty? We are heartened to see substantial investments in mental health, childcare, and housing; all initiatives that help combat the devastating effects of poverty. Committing resources to some of the foundational issues that hold many New Yorkers will have a lasting impact and help give every New Yorker the chance to fulfill their promise.

We eagerly anticipate the governor's Executive Budget and hope to see real solutions to these challenges. Including an 8.5% Human Services COLA, funding foster care rates, and investing in prevention services would signify that this administration truly is committed to moving New York forward.

About Northern Rivers Family of Services

Northern Rivers is a family of human services agencies that work together and are committed to helping children, adults, and families. Formed in 2012, Northern Rivers is the parent organization to Northeast Parent & Child Society (founded in 1888 in Schenectady), Parsons Child & Family Center (founded in 1829 in Albany), and Unlimited Potential (founded in Saratoga Springs in 1979). Together we serve more than 18,000 children, adults, and families in more than 40 counties in New York state who struggle with abuse, neglect, trauma, mental health challenges, educational difficulties, career training and employment, and service navigation through an innovative continuum of home-, clinic-, school-, and community-based services, vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, and senior-supporting programs that provide person-centered, trauma-informed innovative solutions to ensure clients live their best lives. With a 1,400-strong workforce and informed by our nearly 200-year heritage, our quality of care, depth of programs, combined size, and passion for the mission make us a leading human services provider.

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