



New York State Catholic Conference

Issue in Brief

Funding for Vulnerable New Yorkers

ISSUE

Ensure Sufficient Funding for Programs for Vulnerable Populations

BACKGROUND

The state has made a commitment to the protection of people with special needs; in fact our state Constitution *requires* the state to care for the poor and vulnerable. Clearly, developmentally disabled individuals, mentally ill persons, those who are chemically addicted, children and other vulnerable people who need assistance in caring for themselves require support from the state, as they are often incapable of providing their own care. It is important that resources necessary to carry out this mission be provided. It is unacceptable for not-for-profit service providers to be burdened with additional administrative requirements without funding to cover the cost of these mandates. Similarly, it is important for contracts with these providers to include funding that will provide for salaries that will attract quality direct care service providers. A significant cost-of-living adjustment, which was agreed to years ago by the executive and legislative branches, cannot be further delayed. We recognize that difficult budget decisions have to be made, but human service programs cannot be asked to shoulder an unreasonable share of the budget balancing weight. An increase in funding in some areas ultimately saves money in the long run. As the state moves from institutional to community-based provision of services, it is important that the savings accrued from this transition be utilized to support these vulnerable individuals in the less restrictive community setting. Funding for supportive housing, kinship care and supplemental food programs all pay significant dividends.

MESSAGE POINTS

- Providing services to vulnerable people in the least restrictive setting is beneficial and cost effective.
- Not-for-profit providers must be reimbursed for services at a level that supports the cost of providing quality care.
- Direct care workers are deserving of compensation at a level that reflects the value of the work that they do.
- Prevention is less costly than rehabilitation; both are needed.
- Keeping children with family members is generally preferable, where possible.
- Public/Private partnership is necessary to meet the needs of poor and vulnerable people.
- The Church and other not-for-profit providers are willing to do their share, but the state has an obligation to step forward as well.
- Savings from institution-based care must be reinvested in community-based care for persons with mental illness in order to ensure proper services.
- Justice demands that basic human needs must be met for all members of society.

Church Teaching

“For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. A stranger and you welcomed me. Naked and you clothed me. Ill and you cared for me. In prison and you visited me. When did we see you Lord?” – *Mt 25: 35-36*

“The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity.” – *St. John Chrysostom*