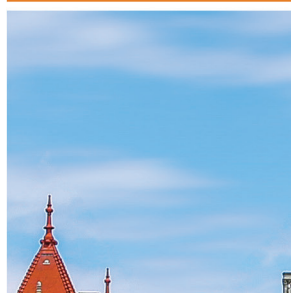
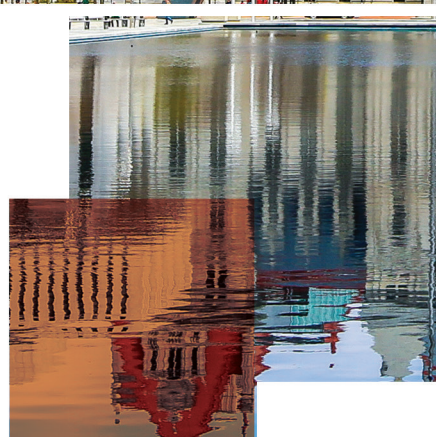
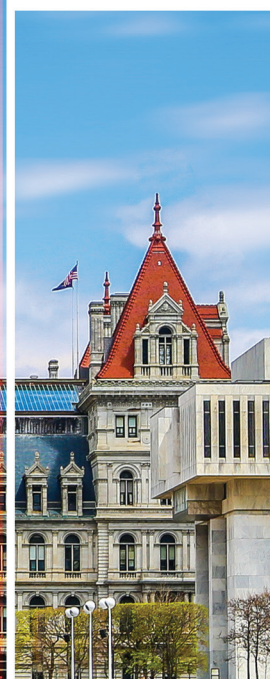


The New York State Assembly Annual Report

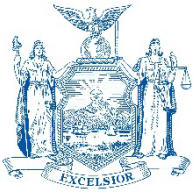


20 25



**Committee on
Mental Health**

Speaker Carl E. Heastie
Jo Anne Simon, CHAIR



THE ASSEMBLY

STATE OF NEW YORK

CHAIR

Mental Health Committee

COMMITTEES

Higher Education

Judiciary

Transportation

Ways and Means

JO ANNE SIMON

Assemblymember 52nd District

December 15, 2025

Honorable Carl E. Heastie Speaker of the Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932

Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is my duty and privilege to submit to you the 2025 Annual Report for the Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health.

As you are aware, over the past few years, New York State has made significant investments into the mental health service system. Under your guidance, my colleagues in the Assembly Majority and members of the Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health have been successful through the budgetary process in securing resources to increase capacity for mental health programs, including mental health housing, in-patient beds, out-patient treatment services, crisis services, and expanding access to mental health services provided under managed care organizations (MCOs).

With your support, the Assembly Majority must continue to advocate for budget initiatives that will help to recruit new staff and retain the current workforce. It is also imperative that the Assembly Majority support initiatives which strengthen the youth mental health service system and mitigate the consequences associated with unmet treatment needs for our most vulnerable populations.

Lastly, under your leadership, we must continue to ensure that involuntary treatment is not the first option for those receiving care in the mental health service system. There are proven forms of treatment and intervention such as (a) Intensive and Sustained Engagement Teams, which is a peer led, voluntary program which has demonstrated success with individuals who have struggled to engage in traditional service settings, people at risk of involuntary treatment such as Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) or have a history of chronic hospitalization or criminal justice involvement; and (b) permanent supportive housing, implemented via the highly efficacious "Housing First" model. The Assembly Majority have supported INSET, supportive housing and many similar programs in the budget and it is imperative that we continue to do so.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your leadership and support of the Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health, and I am confident that the Assembly Majority will have a productive 2025 Legislative Session.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jo Anne Simon".

Jo Anne Simon, Chair
Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health

**2025 ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON MENTAL HEALTH**

**Jo Anne Simon
Chair**

Committee Members

Majority

Sam Berger
Monique Chandler-Waterman
Manny De Los Santos
Chris Eachus
Edward Gibbs
Chantel Jackson
Angelo Santabarbara
Yudelka Tapia

Minority

Andrea Bailey
Keith Brown
Brian Maher
Joe Sempolinski

Committee Staff

JoAnn VanSlyke, Director of Special Projects

Program and Counsel Staff

Janice Nieves, Assistant Secretary for Program and Policy
Willie Sanchez, Principal Analyst
Michael Hegarty, Counsel
Alice Bagley, Executive Secretary

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health has jurisdiction over policy and initiatives affecting programs that deliver services, care, treatment, and advocacy for individuals with various disabilities. The Committee focuses on ensuring that individuals with a mental illness or a developmental disability are provided appropriate and necessary services to live a fulfilling life and are protected from abuse or harm in institutional and community settings.

The Committee has oversight of programs administered and licensed by the Office of Mental Health, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs (Justice Center), and the Inter-Office Coordinating Council (IOCC).

The agencies are expected to serve nearly one million individuals in 2025, including persons with mental illness, individuals with developmental disabilities, and their families. The Committee also works closely with the New York State Assembly Standing Committees on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, and People with Disabilities.

During the 2025 session, the Committee reviewed bills and addressed many issues aimed at providing quality services, enhancing protections, and increasing access to services for individuals with various disabilities.

This report describes the Committee's major legislative activities during the 2025 session.

II. STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Over the past several years, the mental hygiene service system has experienced sweeping changes to funding structures of programs under the auspices of the Office of Mental Health (OMH). The State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025-26 Enacted Budget provides critical resources for individuals with mental illness, and their families. The following proposals and appropriations were enacted in the SFY 2025-2026 Enacted Budget:

A. Daniel's Law Pilot Programs

\$8 million is provided to support the creation and expansion of Daniel's Law Pilot Programs. The pilot will establish programs to deliver a community-based, public health-led response to behavioral health crises utilizing teams that include mental health professionals and peer advocates.

Up to \$2 million of this funding may be utilized to create a statewide Behavioral Health Crisis Technical Assistance Center (BH-TAC). The duties of the center include developing standardized protocols and procedures for a community-based public health-led response to behavioral health crises and assisting local government units in the developing and implementing a public health, community-based response, based on their local service needs.

B. Targeted Inflationary Increase (TII)

Provides funding for a 2.6% TII for programs and services under OMH, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the Office of Addiction Service and Supports (OASAS), the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA), the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), and the State Office for the Aging (SOFA). A total of \$83.1 million is provided to OMH for implementation of the TII.

C. Clubhouses and Youth Safe Spaces

\$8 million to establish up to five new clubhouses and four Youth Safe Spaces. Clubhouses are member-driven programs that provide individuals with serious mental health conditions access to social support, life skills training, employment resources and a sense of community, and Safe Spaces provide a place for young people to access behavioral health wellness resources, foster positive relationships with their peers and receive support in a comfortable setting.

D. Peer Programs

\$1.9 million to establish a hospital-based "peer bridger" program to help transition individuals leaving inpatient care back into the community and expanding Intensive and Sustained Engagement Teams (INSET) to provide peer-led and voluntary supports to individuals who may have a history of chronic hospitalization, incarceration, and non-compliance with treatment.

E. Safe Option Support Teams

\$1.4 million for OMH to add street medicine and street psychiatry to Safe Options Support teams, allowing them to provide immediate medical and psychiatric care to homeless individuals.

III. SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATION

1. **Creating Mental Health Parity with Physical Health**

A.279 (Barrett)/S.2033 (Harckham)

Referred to the Assembly Committee on Judiciary

This bill would amend the New York State Constitution to create parity between health and mental health by clarifying that physical and mental health are equal matters of public concern and mandate the state and local authorities to provide for the protection and promotion of its inhabitant's mental health.

2. **Suicide Prevention Programs for Vulnerable Populations**

A.988 (Davila)

Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means

This bill would require the office of mental health (OMH) to convene statewide forums and listening sessions for the purpose of developing and implementing suicide prevention programs for certain high-risk or special populations.

3. **Enhance Youth Mobile Crisis Services**

A.4276 (Cunningham)/S.8043 (Bynoe)

Veto Memo 64

This bill would require the commissioner of OMH to conduct a study on child and youth mobile crisis outreach teams.

4. **Expand Access to Accredited Clubhouses**

A.4878-C (Tapia)/S.7377-B (Brouk)

Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means

This bill would establish a statutory definition for a mental health clubhouse and create requirements and operational standards for an accredited clubhouse including core services, oversight, compliance, and reporting requirements.

5. **Facilitate Career Development within the Mental Health Service System**

A5545-A (Simon)

Referred to the Assembly Committee on Codes

This bill would direct OMH to establish a new, supervised entry level position of “qualified mental health associate” and establish the minimum qualifications for the position.

6. **Increase Access to Clinical Records for Family Members**

A.5546 (Simon)/S.8532 (Brouk)

Passed the Assembly

This bill would require the commissioner of OMH to promulgate regulations governing the release of certain records to family members of a deceased individual who resided in a facility operated by the Office upon written request of such family member or the release of information upon written

request by a physician of family member who has demonstrated medical need for such information.

7. Promote use of the Mental Health Anti-Stigma Fund

A.5554 (Simon)/S.6849 (Webb)

Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means

This bill would require OMH to direct funds generated from processing operating certificates into the Mental Health Anti-Stigma Fund established under § 9541 of the State Finance Law.

8. End Mental Health Stigma

A.5563 (Simon)

Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means

This bill would require OMH to create a public education and anti-stigma program that would target the public and underserved populations including but not limited to black, Latina and Latino adolescents; members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, persons of Asian descent; service members, veterans; and individuals who reside in rural communities, and any other group deemed appropriate by the commissioner.

9. Increase Training and Clinical Supervision Opportunities for Social Workers

A.5570 (Simon)/S.1727 (Brouk)

Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means

This would require the commissioner of OMH to establish up to three Social Worker Residency pilot programs in community behavioral health organizations.

10. Reduce Death by Suicide of Black Youth

A.6472 (Dais)

Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means

This bill would create a Black youth suicide prevention task force. The taskforce would examine, evaluate and determine how to improve mental health and suicide prevention for Black New York residents aged 5 through 18 years.

IV. HEARINGS & ROUNDTABLES

A. Veterans Mental Health Services

On November 12th, 2025, the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the Standing Committee on Mental Health, and the Assembly Subcommittee on Women's Veterans convened a public hearing on increasing veterans' access to mental health services. The hearing provided the committees and subcommittee an opportunity to examine ways to increase veterans' access to mental health services, including examining the role that existing resources like suicide prevention funding and peer support programs, such as the PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Program, can play in addressing these challenges.

B. Behavioral Health Workforce

On December 10th, 2025, the New York State Assembly Standing Committees on Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Abuse convened a public hearing to examine the status of the behavioral health workforce. The hearing provided an opportunity for the Committee to examine the status of the behavioral health workforce, including rates of attrition and vacancy rates and worker wellness, to assess the need for access to behavioral health professionals statewide, identify existing programs, policies and other initiatives under the Office of Mental Health and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports which may be effective in increasing recruitment and retainment of behavioral health professionals, support career advancement for the present behavioral health workforce and increase public awareness of the behavioral health field as a career option for potential hires. The Committee also utilized this hearing to explore potential legislative and regulatory actions which could help alleviate the behavioral health care workforce shortage.

APPENDIX A

2025 SUMMARY OF ACTION ON ALL BILLS
REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON

Mental Health

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD 4

ASSEMBLY SENATE TOTAL
BILLS BILLS BILLS

BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO:

Codes	1	0	1
Judiciary	1	0	1
Ways and Means	9	0	9
Rules	1	0	1
Floor	1	0	1
TOTAL	13	0	13

COMMITTEE ACTION

Held For Consideration	1	0	1
Defeated	0	0	0
Enacting Clause Stricken	2	0	2
REMAINING IN COMMITTEE	62	7	69

BILLS REFERENCE CHANGED TO:

TOTAL	0	0	0
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APPENDIX B

FINAL ACTION ON BILLS REPORTED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH IN 2025

ASSEMBLY BILL # SPONSOR	SENATE BILL # SPONSOR	FINAL ACTION	Description
A.279 Barrett	S.2033 Harckham	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Judiciary	This bill would amend the New York State Constitution to clarify that physical and mental health are equal matters of public concern and mandate the state and local authorities to protect and promote the mental health of state's inhabitants in a manner determined by the Legislature.
A.988 Davila	NA	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means	This bill would require the office of mental health (OMH) to convene statewide forums and listening sessions for the purpose of developing and implementing suicide prevention programs for certain high-risk or special populations.
A.4276 Cunningham	S.8043 Bynoe	Veto Memo 64	This bill would require the commissioner of OMH to conduct a study on child and youth mobile crisis outreach teams.
A.4637 Anderson	S.4557 Ryan	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means	This bill would require the Commissioner of the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to develop a uniform statewide policy for conducting audits of personal allowance and cash accounts every facility certified by OPWDD to provide services under Article 16 of the Mental Hygiene Law.
A.4878-C Tapia	S.7377-B Brouk	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means	This bill would establish a statutory definition for a mental health clubhouse and create requirements and operational standards for an accredited clubhouse including core services, oversight, compliance, and reporting requirements.
A.5545-A Simon	NA	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Codes	This bill would direct OMH to establish a new, supervised entry level position of "qualified mental health associate" and establish the minimum qualifications for the position.
A.5546 Simon	NA	Passed the Assembly	This bill would require the commissioner of OMH to promulgate regulations governing the release of certain records to a family member of a deceased individual who resided in a facility operated by the Office upon written request of such family member or the release of information upon written request by a physician of family member who has demonstrated medical need for such information.

A.5554 Simon	S.6849 Webb	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means	This bill would require OMH to direct funds generated from processing operating certificates into the Mental Health Anti-Stigma Fund established under § 9541 of the State Finance Law.
A.5559 Simon	S.383 Brouk	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means	This bill would authorize OPWDD to implement a professional credential pilot program for direct support professionals.
A.5563 Simon	NA	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means	This bill would require OMH to create a public education and anti-stigma program that would target the public and underserved populations including but not limited to black, Latina and Latino adolescents; members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, persons of Asian descent; service members, veterans; and individuals who reside in rural communities, and any other group deemed appropriate by the commissioner.
A.5570 Simon	S.1727 Brouk	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means	This would require the commissioner of OMH to establish up to three Social Worker Residency pilot programs in community behavioral health organizations.
A.6472 Dais	NA	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means	This bill would create a Black suicide prevention task force. The taskforce would examine, evaluate and determine how to improve mental health and suicide prevention for Black New York residents aged 5 through 18 years.
A.8424 Tapia	NA	Referred to the Assembly Committee on Rules	This bill would make technical amendments to update obsolete references to a predecessor agency, authorizes the justice center to appoint Surrogate Decision-Making Committee ("SDMC") panel volunteers, and codify current practices on SDMC report creation; provide updates to various sections of law where it references the Commission for Quality and Care (CQC) and replaces with the Justice Center; and makes various technical amendments to the laws to modify gender specific references to gender neutral text.

APPENDIX C

LEGISLATION VETOED 2025

ASSEMBLY BILL # SPONSOR	SENATE BILL # SPONSOR	FINAL ACTION	DESCRIPTION
A.4276 Cunningham	S.8043 Bynoe	Veto Memo 64	This bill would require the commissioner of OMH to conduct a study on child and youth mobile crisis outreach teams.