

LDA

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MEMO IN SUPPORT April 30, 2009

A.7947 Weisenberg/S.4901 Huntley. An act to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to the implementation of a trend factor for payments to certain intermediate care facilities

The Learning Disabilities Association of New York State supports this important legislation.

A learning disability is a neurobiological disorder, meaning there are differences in brain structure and/ or function in a person who has learning disabilities. These differences lead to difficulty in learning and often to difficulties in coping with the challenges and stresses of everyday life. One in seven New Yorkers has a Learning Disability. Often, persons with learning disabilities rely on programs and services operated by not-for-profit agencies funded through OMRDD. It is therefore essential that these programs be adequately funded to meet the needs of the increasing number of persons with learning disabilities in New York State.

This important legislation would provide a 3% trend factor in the OMRDD budget for the current fiscal year to rates funding under 31-bed ICF/DDS and Home and Community Based Waiver programs operated by non-profit agencies. New York State has long recognized that a trend factor is essential to provide critical resources necessary to safeguard the health, safety and even lives of our State's most vulnerable citizens. For three decades, the budget for the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities included a trend factor for its major Medicaid programs. This year the trend factor was discontinued.

The impact of learning disabilities on our society and culture is enormous. Over half of the detainees in juvenile detention facilities have a learning disability. Up to 60% of adolescents in treatment for substance abuse have learning disabilities. 48% of those with learning disabilities are out of the workforce or unemployed. 50% of females with learning disabilities will be mothers (many of them single) within 3-5 years of leaving high school. 44 percent of the TANF (welfare) population were found to have a learning disability. 31% of students with learning disabilities will be arrested 3-5 years out of high school. This legislation is therefore extremely cost effective, as it will lessen the burden on other safety net programs, such as income supports, substance abuse services and incarceration.

The Learning Disabilities Association of New York State therefore supports this bill, and urges that it be enacted into law.