

February 20, 2020

RE: Downsizing within State Agencies

Dear Legislator:

As a constituent and a state employee represented by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), I am extremely concerned how Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget treats many state agencies, including the Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office of People for Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Department of Transportation (DOT), Office of Information Technology Services (OITS). There are proposed cuts to OMH (-105 FTEs) and OCFS (-63 FTEs) this year due to the shifting of responsibilities for defendants deemed mentally incompetent to stand trial and potential closure of a facility. The Governor's proposal would keep many other agencies "flat" in terms of staffing levels, but does nothing to make up for the past years of severe cuts.

Further, in the case of OMH, the agency has reduced more than 600 patient beds over the last six years. This appears to be in an effort to drastically change the state's role from direct care provider to one of supervising and oversight for other entities that provide the care. While in some cases this type of situation may be appropriate, too often community-based programs are ill-equipped to deal with the most severely impacted clients. New York needs to remain committed to ensuring the highest level of care for our most vulnerable citizens. They expect and deserve the best.

The Executive Budget proposes a relatively small (1,007) decrease in staff under the control of the Governor. Over the last decade, OMH, OPWDD, DOT and OITS have all been reduced by more than 10 percent. Many other state agencies have seen their staffing levels cut by 20, 30 or even 70 percent! (Higher Education Services Corporation was reduced by 72 percent from 630 FTEs to 176 FTEs)

As my elected representative, I kindly ask that you work with the leadership in your house to **reject this continued erosion of services provided by well trained state employees at OMH, OPWDD, DOT, OITS and elsewhere.** These agencies need the resources to increase staffing back to previous levels. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,
