

### Public Safety

#### 1. Provide support for county jails developing mental health restoration programs

**Support** additional funding for counties opting to develop restoration units for felony-level defendants while they are restored to competency as they await trial.

The Executive Budget proposal includes establishing jail-based restoration programs for felony-level defendants. The Office of Mental Health (OMH) will work with participating counties to develop these programs. The restoration units are envisioned to operate in counties that volunteer to participate, and will be maintained as separate residential treatment units within the jail.

Counties appreciate the option to participate, but without additional financial support from the state to get such an initiative started we remain concerned about how many counties will have the capacity to set up these treatment units.

#### 2. Reimburse counties for costs of HIV and Hepatitis C treatment for inmates

**Support** legislation to offset the costs of providing HIV and hepatitis C treatment to county inmates.

In 2009, Governor Paterson signed into law the Department of Health Oversight Law (Chapter 419 of the laws of 2009), requiring annual reviews of HIV and hepatitis C care in state and local correctional facilities. The State enacted this new law without providing financial support to counties for implementation of this growing mandated expense. Since the enactment of this law, county jails have been required to provide more extensive testing and treatment to inmates with HIV and hepatitis C. New drugs for treating Hepatitis C cost \$90,000 for 12 weeks of treatment, causing great financial strain to jail medical budgets.

#### 3. Restore funding for marine patrol units

**Oppose** State Budget proposal to reduce marine patrol reimbursement to 25 percent.

The NYS Office of Parks and Recreation is the lead agency for marine law enforcement services, and they rely heavily on local law enforcement, including the Sheriff's Marine Patrol Units. Currently, Sheriff's Departments in over 40 counties outside of New York City operate Marine Patrol Units on navigable waterways in their counties.

Before 2010, government entities patrolling these waterways were reimbursed for 75% of their operating expenses. In 2010, the law was amended to provide participating law enforcement entities 50% of their total operating costs, capital and personnel expenses, refunded up to a maximum of \$200,000. This proposal would further reduce the reimbursement from 50% to 25%, providing \$1 million in State savings, at the expense of boating safety in New York's recreational waterways.

#### **4. Video conferences saves time and money, and protects our communities**

**Support** State Budget proposal to expand video conference in county jails.

The Executive Budget proposes to expand video conferencing and an increase in Aid to Localities funding of \$300,000 for video visitation programs between incarcerated parents and their children. We believe this is a practical time to also expand the use of video conferencing for court appearances for inmates held at a county jails.

Under current law, video conferencing of inmates for arraignment or other court appearances is permitted in several counties, but is actually not in practice because the law requires the inmate to agree to use video conference in place of a court appearance. Many counties have state of the art video conferencing systems that are not used for inmate court appearances, simply because inmates routinely chose to be transported to court rather than make an appearance by video conference.

Expanded use of video conferencing for court appearances would save time and county taxpayer expense by avoiding transporting inmates to court for minor or routine matters, make courtrooms safer, and avoid problems that might happen when inmates are transported by auto or van to a court room many miles away from the jail.