

1 **2022 Legislative Conference**
2 **Standing Committee on Public Health/Mental Health**
3 **Resolution #2**

4 **Resolution Requesting Increased State Aid Funding in the SFY 2023**
5 **Enacted Budget to Support the State’s Behavioral Health Workforce**

6 **WHEREAS**, more than one in three Americans struggle with mental health and/or
7 substance use issues; and

8 **WHEREAS**, according to national studies, 83 million people diagnosed with anxiety or
9 depression were unable to access counseling services in 2020 and 42.9 million people
10 struggling with undiagnosed anxiety or depression had an unmet need for treatment,
11 which doubles the annual number from recent years; and

12 **WHEREAS**, nationally, thousands of mental health and substance abuse practitioners
13 are needed to fill vacancies across all treatment settings, and the New York State
14 workforce shortage mirrors national trends; and

15 **WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with other factors, has only exacerbated
16 the preexisting crisis, with droves of nurses, counselors, psychologists, social workers,
17 and direct service professionals exiting the sector’s workforce or retiring early due to
18 burn out, long hours, low pay, COVID-19 risks, and workplace stress or have moved to
19 private sector jobs with better pay, benefits, and hours; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the current state funding set aside has not been able to adequately support
21 the growing demand for services nor sustain the current needs for workforce retention;
22 and

23 **WHEREAS**, rising operational costs in areas such as technology, health insurance,
24 utilities, and rent add significant burdens on providers to allocate extremely limited
25 fiscal resources to meet both workforce and operational demands; and

26 **WHEREAS**, Local Governmental Units (LGUs) and Directors of Community Services
27 (DCSs) have specific responsibilities and authority under the local services provisions of
28 Article 41 of the NYS Mental Hygiene Law (MHL) for planning, development,
29 implementation, and oversight of services to adults and children in their counties
30 affected by mental illness, substance use disorder, and intellectual/developmental
31 disabilities (I/DD); and

32 **WHEREAS**, LGUs/DCSs see first-hand how unmet mental health and substance abuse
33 concerns are crippling our local communities with rising need for inpatient and
34 outpatient treatment services; increased calls to crisis services lines; rising incidents of
35 overdose and overdose deaths, addiction relapse, and suicide attempts; and the impact
36 of providers struggling to adequately staff and maintain programs; and

1 **WHEREAS**, LGUs/DCSs strongly support the Governor’s Executive Budget proposal to
2 shore up this critical workforce by committing a \$10 billion multi-year investment,
3 including more than \$4 billion to support wages and bonuses for New York State’s
4 healthcare workforce; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the Governor’s proposed \$2 billion to support healthcare and mental
6 hygiene worker retention, \$500 million for Cost of Living (COLAs) raises for the human
7 services workforce, and \$2 billion for healthcare capital infrastructure will be a
8 significant step in the right direction; and

9 **WHEREAS**, the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) and New York State
10 Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors (CLMHD) will strongly advocate for the
11 inclusion of this much-needed state aid in the SFY 2022-23 Enacted Budget and ask for
12 a sustained commitment to these funding levels in the years to come.

13 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, NYSAC calls on the Governor, Division of
14 Budget, and Legislature to ensure these multi-year investments of state aid funding are
15 directed to the counties, communities, and residents they serve; and

16 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that copies of this resolution be sent to the counties
17 of New York State encouraging member counties to enact similar resolutions; and

18 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, NYSAC shall forward copies of this resolution to
19 Governor Kathy Hochul, the New York State Legislature, and all others deemed
20 necessary and proper.