



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 894

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature and Governor to place a moratorium on psychiatric hospital bed closures and on the New York State Office of Mental Health Transformation Plan and to expand the number of psychiatric-center beds within the city and state.

By Council Member Holden

Whereas, In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), under the administration of Governor Andrew Cuomo, began implementing it's "Transformation Plan," in an effort to provide better health care at lower costs by reducing both the average daily census and the total number of beds in state-run psychiatric centers and transitioning the responsibility of care to more local, community-based institutions in a process known as "deinstitutionalization"; and

Whereas, From 2014-2018, non-forensic state psychiatric centers in New York City lost nearly 15% of their total adult bed capacity during implementation of OMH's Transformation Plan, while the average daily census only declined by about 12%; and

Whereas, While state psychiatric centers have reduced their capacity, the duty to care for New Yorkers experiencing serious mental illness has transferred to other systems, namely homeless shelters and jails and prisons, according to a November 2018 report from the Manhattan Institute; and

Whereas, During 2015-2017, the number of seriously mentally ill homeless New York City residents increased by about 2,200, or 22%, also according to the Manhattan Institute report, correlating with a decline in the number of beds in state psychiatric centers during the same time period; and

Whereas, The number of "emotionally disturbed person" calls received by the New York City Police Department (NYPD) has increased every year since 2014, with the amount of persons with serious mental

illness in city jails higher now than in 2014; and

Whereas, New York City has responded to the increase in seriously mentally ill homeless New Yorkers by opening six new dedicated mental health shelters between FY 2014 and FY 2018, which provide on-site behavioral health and medical services, but are not substitutes for true inpatient care; and

Whereas, The total number of beds at mental health shelters now exceed the combined total of adult beds in state psychiatric centers and inpatient psychiatric-care beds in the New York City Health + Hospitals system, with the city operating a total of 28 mental health shelters at the end of FY 2018, the cost of which has grown every year since FY 2014 and currently stands at about \$150 million; and

Whereas, Both state- and citywide, there exist more psychiatric-care beds in general hospitals than in traditional state psychiatric centers, though general hospitals are unlikely to expand their systems of inpatient psychiatric care, with some already having reduced their capacity, due to financial pressures, according to the 2018 Manhattan Institute report; and

Whereas, OMH's Transformation Plan has not resulted in better mental health care at lower costs, but instead has transferred the burden and costs of care to other institutions, including New York City jails and homeless shelters, and placing a moratorium on the Transformation Plan and on state psychiatric-center bed closures, while expanding the number of psychiatric beds available would better serve New Yorkers living with serious mental illness, as well as public safety and communities at-large; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature and Governor to place a moratorium on psychiatric hospital bed closures and on the New York State Office of Mental Health Transformation Plan and to expand the number of psychiatric-center beds within the city and state.

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