

NYPWA Policy Platform 2006

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The New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA), through its leadership, expertise and the influence of its membership, plays a crucial role in shaping social policy in New York State. Our strategic policy platform for 2006 focuses on the following four guiding principles:

I. Ensure Child Safety

- 1) Support policies that enable us to maximize caseworker contacts with families.
- 2) Provide adequate and stable funding to ensure sufficient staffing levels. Effective strategies would include reinstating 75% reimbursement for achieving enhanced caseload ratios and reinvesting in child welfare by restoring the huge cut in Title XX funding adopted in the 2004-05 state budget.
- 3) Enact legislation that would increase the effectiveness of child protective services by providing greater investigative authority, such as the ability to do criminal record checks, and by improving existing laws as identified in our summary of child welfare legislative recommendations for 2006.
- 4) Pursue systems simplification that supports family contact above all else. Tracking data and computerizing more processes is only meaningful if workers can spend quality time out in the field.

II. Promote Full Potential while Meeting Basic Needs

- 1) Make "TANF funding for TANF families" the policy mantra for state appropriations to ensure that those living in poverty are given the assistance that is needed to move forward.
- 2) Support local flexibility for the use of TANF dollars recognizing that offering meaningful options will depend upon the adequacy of the funding provided. Complement the funding with the regulatory flexibility that is needed to enable districts to tailor services to meet individual needs.
- 3) Promote the broadest interpretation of TANF rules to encourage locally driven solutions while ensuring continued federal funding. Focus state policies on facilitating local implementation rather than on new mandates or state fiscal penalties that will drain resources and counteract our success.
- 4) Support strategies that engender full engagement of adults to convey that there is an obligation in exchange for assistance that is provided.
- 5) Develop technology that helps; not hinders staff efforts to assist people in need.

III. Sustain Medicaid through Cost Containment

- 1) Support the implementation of the local Medicaid cap enacted in SFY 2005-06 and provide a policy framework for both consumers and providers to make fiscally responsible decisions.
- 2) Promote effective care management for better health care and lower costs per recipient.
- 3) Streamline eligibility and provide adequate systems support to contain administrative costs.
- 4) Pursue a thoughtful process for long term care reform that carefully considers the cost implications of expanding services and broadening eligibility before moving ahead.

IV. Cultivate a Quality Workforce

- 1) Provide financial support for workforce professionalization and stabilization. Update the state contribution to local administrative costs to keep pace with increased job demands.
- 2) Enhance workforce capacity to do the difficult work that is required. Provide systems support for eligibility determinations and pursue program simplification to achieve a manageable workload.
- 3) Pursue job engineering to adapt to changing needs as social services continue to evolve.
- 4) Recognize that to ensure child safety, promote potential and meet basic needs and sustain Medicaid through cost containment, we are entirely dependent upon a quality workforce. (Feb 21, 06)