

**A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED
BY LEGISLATORS MILLER-WILLIAMS, BURKE & GRANT**

RE: Ensuring the Availability of Inpatient Facilities for Women Seeking Substance Abuse Treatment and Mental Health Services

WHEREAS, the availability of specialized, skilled and sheltered settings that provide substance-abuse treatment beds, detoxification facilities, and mental health services are essential and proven public policy; and

WHEREAS, three residential treatment programs that help women overcome addiction and mental health difficulties, Canaan House (Walden Ave., Cheektowaga), New Life Residential Center (Memorial Dr., Buffalo), and Paradise House (Mills St., Buffalo) have announced that they will be forced to close on April 1, 2014 due to a significant reduction in funding from the Erie County Department of Social Services; and

WHEREAS, such an announcement is troubling in that with Canaan House, New Life and Paradise House closing their doors, the community will be without a significant amount of inpatient beds at a time when any reduction in inpatient beds is too much to bear; and

WHEREAS, New Life Residential Center announced that their closing is due to a slashing of the "shelter rate," currently \$667.00, and being reduced to \$169.00, representing a 74.66% decrease in funding by the Department of Social Services; and

WHEREAS, in order to transition more women into treatment, ensure a higher quality of life for these women, and at the same time reduce the expenditure of public tax dollars being spent in myriad ways when fewer treatment beds are available, Erie County must make certain that these community resources remain open, viable and strong so that more women can begin recovery, turn their lives around, secure meaningful employment and become productive members of our community; and

WHEREAS, in light of an ever-increasing toll of hospitalizations and deaths attributed to drug overdoses throughout Erie County, particularly deaths caused by opioid overdoses in the form of prescription pills, heroin and increasingly, fentanyl; that this serious matter of the loss of life-saving inpatient treatment beds warrants a full public discussion in this Honorable Body's Health & Human Services Committee.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature declares that public policy that ensures the continued viability of community-based inpatient substance-abuse treatment, counseling and mental health services are appropriate and essential, and must be strongly supported by Erie County government and the County's Social Services administration; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Commissioner of Social Services provide a detailed reasoning to this Legislature for the reduction in funding, together with the methodology used to reach a

policy of reduced funding, and a plan that provides for a continuity of care for affected women; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Commissioner of Social Services, and representatives from Canaan House, New Life Residential Center, and Paradise House be invited to attend – as soon as possible – a meeting of this Legislature’s Health & Human Services Committee to discuss the funding reductions and announced closings of these community services; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Legislature forward certified copies of this resolution to the County Executive, Mayor of the City of Buffalo, Supervisor of the Town of Cheektowaga, Commissioner of Social Services, and to the appropriate staff at Canaan House (1140 Walden Ave., Cheektowaga, NY 14211), New Life Residential Center (24 Memorial Dr., Buffalo, NY 14206), and Paradise House (144 Mills St., Buffalo, NY 14212).

FISCAL IMPACT: Positive for taxpayers.