



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Rauner Budget Proposal Harms the Most Vulnerable

Plan eliminates mental health & substance abuse care for thousands

(Dixon, IL)

Governor Bruce **Rauner's proposed state budget** for next year will **eliminate basic mental health and addiction services** for more than as many as 4,600 individuals, across Carroll, Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties; Sinnissippi Centers' primary service area.

According to a February budget briefing conducted by the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), the state budget for community mental health and addiction care treatment and services funded by DHS faces nearly \$127 million in proposed cuts:

- Department of Human Services-Division of Mental Health for FY 2016 community mental health services proposes cuts of over \$98 million. The \$98 million reduction includes:
 - **A 50% cut to Mental Health Care Coordination**
 - **A 45% cut to Special Projects**; including funds received by community mental health centers to serve those affected by the closure of Singer Mental Health Center
 - **The elimination of:**
 - Grants to support psychiatric (medication) services
 - Counseling for those without adequate insurance
 - CHIP: Comprehensive Hospital Inpatient Program which provides for inpatient hospitalization of those who might be homicidal or suicidal
 - Crisis services
 - Integrated Health Care
 - Individual Placement and Support Program which supports individuals in attaining and maintaining employment
- Department of Human Services-Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse **reductions** of \$27.6 million in community addiction treatment services including:
 - A 20% reduction in services for Department of Children and Family Services clients (\$1.8M)
 - A 20% reduction in services in Child Inpatient Services – (\$191.0K)
 - A 10% reduction in Recovery Home Services – (\$290.0K)
 - A 10% reduction in Heroin Addiction Treatment Services – (\$1.9M)
 - A 20% reduction in General Outpatient Treatment Services – (\$23.4M)

Patrick Phelan President and CEO of Sinnissippi Centers offers a breakdown of the loss of care for 4600 individuals: "The elimination of grant funding to support psychiatric services will result in an inability to sustain those services. Approximately 4000 adults and children utilize

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our prescribers for critical medications every year. In addition, cuts to treatment services for substance abuse and mental health result in approximately 600 individuals going without counseling supports.”

“On the one hand,” Phelan said, “this budget proposes to virtually destroy the existing infrastructure, while on the other it vows to expand treatment options for individuals struggling with reentry from correctional systems. The irony here is that by dismantling the community behavioral health system, our jails and prisons will become the default service provider for many seriously ill individuals. This is a very expensive and ineffective plan to provide treatment to those in need.”

“It is a budget that does not work,” says Phelan. “Governor Rauner and lawmakers need to go back to square one and design a budget that meets the needs of our residents, and produces real cost savings. The current proposal only leads to huge gaps in care, which in turn will lead to tremendous increases in emergency services, and ultimately a rising death toll amongst those with a mental illness or substance abuse disorder.”

"In the coming weeks, our plea is for the General Assembly to reshape the state budget proposal in order to avoid nearly \$127 million in cuts to community mental health and addiction treatment services.”

“To add insult to injury,” adds Phelan, “the state also needs to patch the current year’s budget as well. In some ways this is even worse because while we know what cuts are proposed for the new budget, we don’t have any specifics yet on the current budget, and so we don’t even know how to plan for tomorrow, and cuts that will hit first and hit hard,” adds Phelan. “We have been informed that shortly we will receive a letter from the Division of Mental Health and other agencies stating that programs should be discontinued immediately as no further funding is available. Although we can’t get any details from Springfield, early indications are that we will see decimation of services from crisis support to counseling to medication management.”

We completely understand the financial mess that the state is in and realize that the budgets of the past years cannot be sustained. However, Illinois has been cutting human services agencies year after year for nearly a decade and there is nothing left to cut except the most essential care to those who need it. This is not a solution,” says Phelan. “The solution has to be a thoughtful combination of decreased spending, but also some creative funding to at least keep the system in place until July.”

“We would like to urge everyone in the State of Illinois to keep in contact with their legislators and let your voice be heard about this budgeting process,” says Phelan.

Sinnissippi Centers is a behavioral healthcare agency serving Carroll, Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties and provides substance abuse screening and treatment services.

For more information about programs and services, call Sinnissippi toll-free at 1-800-242-7642. Sinnissippi has office locations in Dixon, Mt. Carroll, Oregon, Rochelle and Sterling.

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