



## New York State Society for Clinical Social Work

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[www.nysscsw.org](http://www.nysscsw.org)

Friday, December 10, 2010

Dear County Legislators/County Executive:

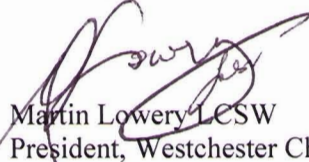
The New York State Society for Clinical Social Work is a membership association of clinical social workers providing mental health treatment services throughout New York State. The Society is organized in regional chapters and this letter is sent on its behalf and on behalf of the Westchester Chapter to express our concern over the decision to close the 5 mental health clinics operated by the Department of Community Mental Health.

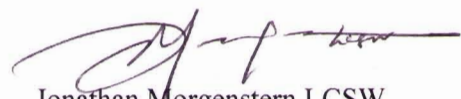
While cognizant of the need for cost cutting measures we urge that maximum effort be made to first seek measures that are less destabilizing to the lives of fragile and vulnerable consumers of the services provided by these clinics. These clinics have become well established in their areas and their immediate communities - service consumers have come to rely on these services for support of their daily living, obviating the needs for more costly support services. It is recommended that a rigorous operations cost analysis be performed to see whether the service might be offered in a more economical manner, rather than closing it altogether.

While respectful of the record of service of the private agencies reported as offering to absorb transferred cases, questions had been raised about the availability of sufficient slots, the adequate availability of services in Spanish, and therefore related risk of losing cases along the process of transfer. We are also concerned about the professionals who now staff all 5 clinics - no mention has been made regarding their absorption to insure the continued local utilization of their skills to the benefit of service consumers.

We strongly urge a reconsideration of this decision.

Sincerely,

  
Martin Lowery LCSW  
President, Westchester Chapter

  
Jonathan Morgenstern LCSW  
President, NYSSCSW

PS: We are both residents of and work within Westchester county, as are the majority of our chapter membership.