Memorandum of Support

The Education Budget and Article VII

A.3006/S.4006

The New York State Occupational Therapy Association supports the following proposals:

NYSOTA supports the Governor’s proposal to increase Foundation Aid by $2.7 billion, completing the three-year phase-in of full funding, which reaches $5.7 billion. Foundation Aid provides an important lift for high need school districts by allocating State funds equitably to all school districts based on student need, community wealth, and regional cost differences.

The State Education Department should be further charged with developing plans for continued programs to foster greater equity in education.

NYSOTA supports the Governor’s proposal to add $125 million to state funding for full-day prekindergarten programs for four-year-old children, bringing the State’s annual support for such programs to $1.2 billion. Full-day kindergarten provides important opportunities for social, cognitive and behavioral development at an early formative year.

Occupational therapy helps children to fulfill their role as students by supporting their academic achievement and promoting positive behaviors necessary for learning. School occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants provide interventions that improve physical, behavioral, cognitive and social skills that lead to successful educational performance.
The Health Budget and Article VII

A.3007/S.4007

The New York State Occupational Therapy Association supports the following proposals:

Expanding the Medicaid Buy-in Program for New Yorkers with Disabilities so that more New Yorkers with disabilities can work and still qualify for Medicaid coverage. The Medicaid program provides coverage for durable medical equipment and support services commercial insurance plans do not provide. These benefits help individuals with disabilities to live and work in the community.

Expanding Medicaid Coverage of Preventative Health Services. The Budget supports critical preventative care for Medicaid enrollees including expanding Adverse Childhood Experiences screening, coverage of spinal muscular atrophy prenatal screening and expanding screening for social determinants of health. Research regarding childhood development reveals that adverse childhood experiences and social determinants of health have a severe effect on the future psychological, social and occupational functioning of the individual. Identifying these factors can help direct further interventions.

Increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates for school-based health centers, which increase access to primary care and other health services for children and their families. Educational settings, especially in lower socio-economic communities, have become an integral point of contact for children in need of primary care and health care.

NYSOTA agrees that poverty and poor housing have a significant impact on the health and functioning of individuals and communities. At the same time, we would assert that an individual’s access to opportunities to engage in productive and meaningful occupations will also have a profound effect on that person’s long-term health and functioning in our communities.

The New York State Occupational Therapy Association supports the aforementioned recommendations in the Governor’s budget and Article VII legislation.