



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Testimony submitted to the New York City Council Committee on Hospitals

Re: FY27 Preliminary Budget – Hospitals

March 16, 2026

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On behalf of Advocates for Children of New York (AFC), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget. For more than 50 years, AFC has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds.

Each year, AFC works with students who have significant mental health challenges and who have been unable to access the mental health services they need to be successful in the classroom. As such, we understand the impact a program such as the Mental Health Continuum, a cross-agency partnership between NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H), New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), and the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), can have on student wellbeing.

The Mental Health Continuum supports students at 50 high-needs schools through school partnerships with Health + Hospitals mental health clinics, dedicated staff to provide students with timely access to mental health services, a NYC Well hotline to advise school staff, mobile response teams to respond to students in crisis, and training for school staff in Collaborative Problem Solving to build their capacity to address student behavior. This program, which is currently serving thousands of students, is supported with \$5M in one-year city funding set to expire in June.

We strongly urge the Council to prioritize this investment in the mental health and academic success of New York City's young people and ensure the Fiscal Year 2027 budget extends and baselines funding for the Mental Health Continuum at its current funding level of \$5M (H+H: \$3.74M, NYCPS: \$787K, DOHMH: \$472K) so that this program, which is already up and running, can continue to provide valuable support to students and school communities to address mental health needs. Schools participating in the program have reported positive outcomes, including reductions in student suspensions, incident reports, and transports to hospital emergency rooms when students are in crisis. These outcomes



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demonstrate the positive impact the program is having on student wellbeing and school climate. Ensuring stable, baselined funding will enable the program to sustain the critical supports it provides to students and strengthen the capacity of school communities to address mental health challenges.

Advocates for Children's full city education budget priorities are online at <https://advocatesforchildren.org/policy-resource/budget-priorities-2027>.

We look forward to working with you as the budget process moves forward. Thank you, again, for the opportunity to submit testimony.