



## **NYSPA Applauds Appointment of Robert Kent as General Counsel of White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)**

NYSPA is pleased to announce that Robert Kent, Esq., former General Counsel of the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS), has been appointed to serve as General Counsel to the White House Office of National Drug Policy in President Biden's administration.

NYSPA has worked extensively with Mr. Kent over the years to advance implementation of federal and state mental health and substance use disorder parity, including the passage, enactment and implementation of the historic Behavioral Health Insurance Parity Reforms (BHIPR) program as part of the 2019-20 budget. The BHIPR included a requirement that the Office of Mental Health approve the medical necessity criteria used by insurers and health plans to make coverage decisions – a model Mr. Kent previously established at OASAS.

“NYSPA is thrilled for Mr. Kent and his new role in Washington. Given his years of experience and expertise in expanding access to care and treatment for those with mental health and substance use disorders in New York, we are looking forward to his future work at the federal level. The culmination of Mr. Kent's successes that are now codified into New York State law serve as an example for the nation and are a proud record of accomplishment,” said Jeffrey Borenstein, MD, NYSPA President.

Previous legislative efforts spearheaded by Mr. Kent include initiatives that enhanced access to medication assisted treatment and coverage of medications used to treat substance use disorders under Medicaid and commercial insurance as well as the establishment of the MH/SUD ombudsman program known as the New York State's Community Health Access to Addiction & Mental Healthcare Project (CHAMP), which provides a critical resource for New Yorkers facing difficulty in accessing care and treatment including investigating and resolving complaints.

NYSPA congratulates Mr. Kent and wishes him great success in his new position.



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