

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE
ALBANY, NY 12247



January 9, 2018

Maria Vullo
Superintendent
New York State Department of Financial Services
One State Street
New York, NY 10004

Dear Superintendent Vullo:

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the difficulties that Long Islanders face accessing treatment for mental illness and addiction. The North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center recently released a troubling study, "Project Access," which surveyed network adequacy and patients' ability to access timely mental health and addiction services.

Project Access found startling results, showing insurance networks failed to grant access to an adequate number of doctors and providers in a timely manner for almost 40% of survey respondents. Further, about 50% reported it was more difficult to seek help for mental health illness than for physical maladies. In addition, 66% indicated it took between 2 to 15 doctors to access the care respondents needed when they were experiencing a crisis or a traumatic event. This may be a matter of life and death for the middle class families that we represent, and we need to act now.

It is imperative your department conduct a thorough investigation to determine why insurance companies are not being held accountable for network adequacy. When New York State neglects to monitor and regulate for network adequacy, mental health care becomes unavailable for too many. As you know, failure to properly treat mental health issues feeds into the opioid epidemic we experience in society today. This is simply unacceptable, and New York's network adequacy must be investigated. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Kaminsky".

Todd Kaminsky
Senator, 9th District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elaine Phillips".

Elaine Phillips
Senator, 7th District