**Sample Letter to Your Legislator**

Date

Legislator’s Name
Address

Dear (Legislator Name),

I am writing you today to call your attention to the Governor’s attempt to extend the implementation of our licensing laws until July 2021.

For decades, several state agencies have escaped implementation of licensure laws passed in 2002, which requires mental health providers to meet a minimum standard of education, experience, and exam requirements in order to diagnose and treat mental illness. This law ensures that individuals providing such services are qualified to do so.

Exempt agencies are slated to come into compliance July of this year, but are again requesting an extension. Both the Governor and Assembly are in support to grant this extension, as his executive budget and the Assembly one-house budget bill include the extension of licensure exemption until July 2021. This gives exempt state agencies a staggering 19 years to come into compliance.

This exemption has been on the books for too long, and is unacceptable and discriminatory to New York’s most vulnerable citizens. New Yorkers who rely on programs regulated, operated, or funded by exempt agencies, have to rely on the luck of the draw when they enter the system. In other words, they may see a qualified provider or they may see a provider who has no more than a high school diploma.

 It is critical that every person in need of mental health and child welfare services be diagnosed by a provider that is licensed to diagnose, and be assured that care is provided by a licensed provider. No other healthcare profession has this bifurcated system of care.

I urge you to hold agencies accountable to the licensing requirements that were rightfully enacted in 2002 and preserve quality care for all New Yorkers seeking mental health services.

Sincerely,

Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip code