

Meeting date: June 23, 2026

Summary:

1. H.R. 1 Overview and Local Impacts

The board spent significant time discussing how to protect vulnerable New Yorkers from upcoming Medicare and food stamp cuts.

- Approximately 200,000 New York City residents on the Essential Plan (earning between \$31,000 and \$39,000) are facing coverage loss by July 1st. A larger wave of general Medicaid cuts is expected by January 1st (affecting around 850,000 statewide).
- Members noted that forcing these individuals onto the private market is unrealistic, as premiums can run \$500–\$600 a month.
- Members suggested looking at how chronic medical conditions (like heart disease or requiring dialysis) are documented for exemptions. Aligning mental health documentation with these medical parity laws could provide a stronger legal framework for keeping clients covered.
- Another member noted that during the 1990s, HIV clinic providers had to document diagnoses and treatment to ensure patients got necessary care. The board suggested exploring a similar training for mental health providers, as plan administrators look for very specific terminology that clinicians don't naturally use.
- Members stressed the need for extreme caution. If a client in recovery sees their chart and reads that their provider legally classified them as completely incapable of working, it can shatter their self-esteem and derail their progress.

2. Youth Committee on Mental Health

The Bureau of Children Youth and Families and Developmental Disabilities provided an update on their youth-led advisory group. Youth Committee on Mental Health is a platform for people ages 16–24 to advise NYC Health Department on how to support the mental health and well-being of NYC youth as well as help shape youth mental health policy.

Key Youth Committee accomplishments for 2025 include:

- Developed a prototype for a **Student Wellness Club toolkit** to be used in middle and high schools.
- Helped shape the suicide prevention module for the toolkit.
- Conducted user testing for an upcoming service directory website.

- Drafted the facilitation guide to be used in conducting youth focus groups to assess **Children's Mobile Crisis Teams** (a 988-dispatched service staffed by clinicians and family peer advocates).

The Youth Committee is currently seeking applications for its third cohort (starting in October). Youth Committee members receive a \$375 quarterly stipend, and CSB members were urged to distribute flyers to promote the opportunity among their network of young people. Deadline to complete application form is July 15, 2026.

3. The Local Services Plan (LSP)

Members reviewed the four-year (2024–2027) Local Services Plan:

- Members expressed concern with one goal that focuses on adults with Severe Mental Illness (SMI) stated that care should be "race-conscious and trauma-informed."
- One member expressed concern that using the word "race" acts as a political trigger that could cause higher-ups to pull funding ("dollar signs"). Members argued that "culture" is a safer, more inclusive term that encompasses everyone's unique background (e.g., Caribbean, Black American, Latino, Asian) without provoking defensiveness.
- Other members agreed that race is a "social construct" and culture is highly nuanced, but they argued that replacing race with culture completely ignores the very real, systemic issue of racial bias.
- The group agreed that it should not be an "either/or" scenario. The board recommended revising the language to capture both concepts—such as care that is "conscious of racial bias and culturally informed"—to appease political sensitivities without erasing the reality of discrimination.