

NY Alliance Calls for I/DD Sector Vaccination Prioritization

The New York Alliance for Inclusion & Innovation has called upon Governor Cuomo to prioritize people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as a priority #1 population when the COVID-19 vaccination plan is publicized. In addition to people with I/DD, the NY Alliance urged the Governor, through a letter sent to the Executive Chamber with copies to the Commissioner of the NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities and the Commissioner of the NYS Department of Health, to also indicate that direct support professionals (DSPs) and other frontline workers in the I/DD sector as priority populations to also be inoculated.

NY Alliance is one of many voices articulating support for prioritizing people with I/DD and DSPs in vaccinations, including other provider associations, CCOs, as well as our collaborators at [Syracuse University and SUNY Upstate Medical Center](#). NY Alliance members have been contributing weekly to the survey data NYDA is collecting and working collaboratively with these researchers as they study the data. We thank you for your ongoing survey responses – they are making a difference! It seems that some of these advocacy efforts are yielding results. In the Governor's 12/11 daily Covid-19 briefing, the administration appears to be suggesting that at least some people with I/DD and their staff will indeed be part of phase 1 of vaccine distribution.

We are hopeful that continued advocacy efforts will be successful. Please be assured that we will provide members with additional information as soon as it becomes available.

In the meantime, we are pleased to share [helpful information](#) from the CDC with you.

OPWDD Releases ADM on Levels of Supervision

The NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) issued an administrative memorandum (ADM) regarding levels of supervision for people receiving services. According to OPWDD, the purpose of the ADM is to improve the quality of care provided to individuals who receive services and supports and it establishes consistent terminology, definitions and factors to consider when planning, documenting, and delivering the necessary Levels of Supervision (LOS) to individuals receiving services. Agency policy and procedure pertaining to LOS shall incorporate the person-centered levels of supervision defined herein. For more information, [click here](#).

One Thousand Rallied Virtually to Save our Services

S.O.S. - Save our Services was the war cry from one thousand Self-Advocates, families, friends and other stakeholders in the community of disability services who rallied virtually on Thursday, December 9, 2020 to ask legislators in Albany to be advocates, and to ask Governor Cuomo to be our hero and fully fund services.



Members of the state legislature and the Governor were invited to hear from Self-Advocates, DSPs, Families and legislators – some with loved ones who receive services. All present to share how years of cuts, under funding and COVID has severely impacted services for individuals. Assembly Member Missy Miller who is a parent of a child with special needs spoke of the need for the Governor to reconsider cuts to the field of disability services stating the one thousand participants gathered for the virtual rally indicates how important this is to so many people across the state. Year after year provider agencies and DSPs have committedly and creatively provided services with less and they are stretched to the limit. Assembly Member Miller said, “the Governor, OPWDD, OMH - they need to step up and accommodate us - fund the programs and services that keep our loved ones happy, safe and independent as possible. Make us a priority...”. Sen. Roxanne Persaud said, “Every year we’re fighting - social service funds are the first on the chopping block.” As reported in the [Brooklyn Paper](#), these types of services have seen a multitude of cuts over the past decade that threaten to further devastate services and the field.



The rally, moderated by Barb DeLong of the DDAWNY Family Committee, was the coalescing of groups of family members, Self-Advocates, and friends from around the state. Speakers included Assembly Members Aileen Gunther, Mary Beth Walsh, Michael Cusick, Angelo Santabarbara, Jim Gaughran; Senators Tim Kennedy, Gustavo Rivera and other

advocates who addressed the work of DSPs, residential services, waiver cuts, the 20 percent withhold and self-direction.

Self-Advocate Danielle Lazarra surrounded virtually by a sea of SOS Save our Services signs stated, “Please don’t cut our services because a little goes a long way”.

To view the rally in its entirety on YouTube, [click here](#).