



ADVOCACY UPDATE!

Our Issues. Our voices.

January 11, 2020

Call to Action: Vaccine Priority for New Yorkers With I/DD

Nearly 100,000 New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) supported and served in community-based settings have yet to be placed within a priority vaccination group. In response, The Arc New York has launched a state-wide grassroots campaign, sending the message to all state and federal representatives that all people with I/DD should receive Phase 1 vaccination priority. To add your voice to this important initiative, follow [this link](#), provide your information, and the letter will be sent right to your representative's email.

CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION NOW!

In support of our ongoing advocacy on this issue, The Arc New York's President Jack Kowalczyk submitted an [Op-ed](#) to media outlets throughout the state calling for vaccine prioritization for all New Yorkers with I/DD. The Arc NY also signed on to a joint [letter to Governor Cuomo](#) advocating for all individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to be formally prioritized in Phase 1 of New York's COVID-19 vaccination plan.

New Committees for Developmental Disabilities in NYS Legislature

The New York State Assembly and Senate have introduced new standing committees to oversee bills and laws concerning people with disabilities, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), and the Justice Center.

Previously, mental health and developmental disabilities were served by a single committee in each house. The leadership of the new committees can be found below, as well as links to their legislative website.

[NYS Senate Committee on Developmental Disabilities](#)

- **John Mannion, Chair**
- **Fred Akshar**
- **John E. Brooks**
- **Simcha Felder**
- **Brad Hoylman**
- **Mike Martucci**
- **Roxanne J. Persaud**

You can read Senator Mannion's perspective and motivation for chairing the Developmental Disabilities Committee [here](#).

[NYS Assembly Committee on People with Disabilities](#)

- **Thomas J. Abinanti, Chair**
- **Khaleel M. Anderson**
- **Joe Angelino**
- **Chris Burdick**
- **Harvey Epstein**
- **Karen McMahon**
- **Melissa Miller**
- **Stefani Zinerman**

[NYS Senate Committee on Mental Health](#)

- **Samra G. Brouk, Chair**
- **John E. Brooks**
- **Simcha Felder**
- **Anthony Palumbo**
- **Gustavo Rivera**
- **Luis R. Sepulveda**
- **James Tedisco**

[NYS Assembly Committee on Mental Health](#)

- **Aileen M. Gunther, Chair**
- **Didi Barrett**
- **Carmen N. De La Rosa**
- **Nathalia Fernandez**
- **Mathylde Frontus**
- **Jarett Gandolfo**
- **Chantel Jackson**
- **Melissa Miller**
- **Diana C. Richardson**
- **Robert J. Rodriguez**
- **Angelo Santabarbara**
- **Mary Beth Walsh**

Highlights from Governor Cuomo's First State of the State Address

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today delivered his 2021 State of the State address, which is the first of four. The Governor's 2021 agenda theme is, "[Reimagine - Rebuild - Renew](#)." With a looming \$15 billion deficit, the governor acknowledged a difficult fiscal year ahead, but was hopeful that federal assistance and changes to policy would help reduce the strain now and into the future. The governor is seeking the repeal of the federal deduction cap on State and Local Tax (SALT), increases to Medicaid reimbursement rates, and equitable infrastructure funding. The 2021-22 Executive Budget is expected to be released by or on Tuesday January 19. Below are a few proposals of note.

Medical Supplies Act

To combat future scarcity of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the governor proposed the Medical Supplies Act, which would prioritize buying American-made PPE and medical supplies. This reduces dependency on foreign manufacturers and supply chain issues experienced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Comprehensive Telehealth Legislation

Expansion of telehealth is a top advocacy priority of The Arc New York. The proposed legislation would adjust reimbursement incentives to encourage telehealth, eliminate outdated regulatory prohibitions on the delivery of telehealth, remove outdated location requirements, address technical unease among both patients and providers through training programs, and establish other programs to incentivize innovative uses of telehealth. Additional details can be found [here](#).

Free Citizen Public Health Training

The state has proposed a free online citizen public health training program, offered in partnership with Cornell University, to educate and certify New Yorkers to be prepared to volunteer and help their communities the next time there is a health emergency.

Increased Access to Broadband

Governor Cuomo reiterated the need for broadband expansion in rural and underserved areas. Noting how the COVID-19 pandemic brought the classroom and office into the home, the need for broadband access is more salient than ever. No additional details were provided.

We will keep you apprised as further details of the 2021 Agenda are released, and will continue to advocate for the inclusion of funding to support New Yorkers with I/DD in the 2021-22 New York State Budget.