



Meeting Life's Challenges

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October 8, 2020

Dear friends, families, and individuals we support.

We need your help! I am writing you to share some troubling news that recently came from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). OPWDD instituted funding cuts, effective October 1, 2020, that place many agencies that serve and support the disability population in financial jeopardy. These reductions are directed at residential programs and could cause agencies to reduce the residential opportunities available to people with disabilities in order to remain financially viable. These cuts also make it financially difficult for agencies to keep placements open for individuals to return from rehabilitation and/or nursing home placement and also impacts funding that covers families taking their loved ones' home for visits and vacations.

Additionally, OPWDD has instituted a "hold back" of 20% of state funds that provide room and board subsidies for individuals living independently, as well as family support funding (FSS) that families depend on to take care of their children living at home. It's understandable that NYS must develop strategies to address a looming deficit, however cutting funding that supports New York's most vulnerable citizens is not acceptable.

These cuts clearly impact the sustainability of the OPWDD service system, especially the availability of residential services. To consider implementing these drastic cuts during the COVID 19 pandemic where agencies are already struggling with increased costs and lost revenue is painful to individuals with disabilities and the agencies that support them.

While we are working with many of the state-wide associations to convince OPWDD to repeal the nearly \$200 million in funding cuts, it's the families and advocates that often have the greatest impact. **Your voice speaks volumes!**

Please contact Governor Cuomo's office at 518-474-1041 and let him know that New York has a constitutional obligation to care for its most vulnerable citizens and we oppose these cuts! If you would prefer to send an email, go to <https://www.votervoicenet.com/cpanys/campaigns/76012/respond>, and ensure your voice is heard!

I genuinely appreciate your assistance in helping us advocate for you and those you support to ensure they continue to get the best possible care and services.

If you have any questions or concerns, I'm available at emartin@livingresources.org or 518-218-0000 x5530.

Best regards for your health and safety,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Martin".

Elizabeth Martin
Chief Executive Officer