



December 15, 2020

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Hon. Governor Cuomo,

This letter is being sent on behalf of the seven Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs) providing Care Management to 120,000 Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities throughout the state of New York. The CCOs promote the delivery of comprehensive and effective person-centered care management to this vulnerable population.

We would like to take this opportunity to collectively thank you for your leadership during these unprecedented times. There's unanimous appreciation for the efforts you have expended for the entire state of NY throughout this pandemic and specifically for your attention to this particularly delicate population and for allowing for the expedition of the distribution of the eagerly anticipated COVID-19 vaccine to the I/DD individuals residing in congregate care settings.

We are writing today to advocate on behalf of the portion of the I/DD population that resides in community-based settings for prioritization when it comes to distribution of the newly released COVID-19 vaccination.

Of the 120,000 individuals with I/DD receiving services in the state of NY, close to 80,000 reside either alone or with family, in community based settings. Of the individuals with I/DD residing in community based settings, the majority of them access vital services in group settings on a regular basis.

The I/DD population is particularly vulnerable to the risks of COVID-19 due to their extensive comorbidities as well as the crucial care received in a multitude of group settings, leaving them at high risk for exposure to the effects of this pandemic, exponentially increasing their risk not only for contracting COVID-19 but also for transmitting the virus to others.

In addition, due to their significant cognitive impairments, the rate of compliance with preventative measures such as social distancing, mask wearing, and hygiene and handwashing is also severely decreased amongst this population.

In planning for the hierarchal prioritization of distribution of this vaccine throughout the state of New York, we are advocating that the individuals with I/DD residing in community based settings, as well as the direct care staff and care management staff for these individuals, be given priority when it comes to vaccine distribution.

The negative ramifications of the COVID-19 virus to these individuals related to their comorbidities, chronic conditions, decreased rate of compliance with treatment regimens, and difficulty treating their illnesses both at home and in



hospital settings due to their significant cognitive dysfunction, needs to be addressed and valued when prioritizing the need to vaccinate this group of high need individuals.

On behalf of the seven CCOs, we have been and will continue to work closely with the state of New York to protect and plan for this vulnerable population so that they can remain safe while their needs both in residential and community settings continue to be met.

Sincerely,

Lewis Grossman, CEO, Advanced Care Alliance NY

James Moran, CEO, Care Design NY

Nicholas Cappoletti, CEO, LIFEPlan CCO NY

Bridget Bartolone, President & CEO, Person Centered Services

Katie Wagner, Executive Director, Prime Care Coordination

Patricia Kennedy, Board President, Southern Tier Connect

Yoel Bernath, CEO, Tri-County Care

Cc: Dr. Theodore Kastner, Commissioner, Office for People with Developmental Disabilities  
Robert Mujica, Director of Budget, State of NY  
Kerri Neifeld, MSW, Assistant Secretary for Human Services and Mental Hygiene  
Megan Baldwin, Assistant Secretary for Health