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Dear Care Design NY Members and Families,

This month, we celebrate a key moment in the history of our country that shaped the way people with disabilities are able to live, learn, work and play in our communities today.

On July 26, 1990, President George H. W. Bush signed S. 933, the ***Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990***, (ADA). He stated the following when signing:

"It is altogether fitting that the American people have once again given clear expression to our most basic ideals of freedom and equality. The Americans with Disabilities Act represents the full flowering of our democratic principles, and it gives me great pleasure to sign it into law today."

Thanks to the ADA landmark legislation, 30 years later, people with disabilities have equal rights under the law – better access, better education, and better jobs. The winds of change that swept our country in the 90's to advance the rights of people with disabilities also helped our advocacy efforts in New York State. I vividly recall when the ADA was signed.

I was working at OPWDD, then OMRDD. We were in negotiations with the Federal Government (CMS), on the development of the initial Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver that would provide Medicaid funding for individuals with intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) to receive services in a non-institutional setting. A year later, in 1991, the HCBS Waiver was approved and implemented; a huge victory for the New York State I/DD community. Ironically, New York's Governor, when this watershed moment occurred, was Mario Cuomo.

The ADA has given greater hope and dignity to countless Americans. In New York State, the 107,000 individuals with I/DD that Care Coordination Organizations/Health Homes (CCOs/HHs) support, and specifically the 26,000 members that Care Design NY serves, are able to take advantage of fundamental opportunities that 30 years ago would have been closed to them.

Service Regions: Long Island • Queens • Staten Island • Brooklyn • Manhattan • Bronx • Lower Hudson Valley
Upper Hudson Valley • Capital District • North Country

Yet despite our advocacy efforts and advancements to achieve full equality for people with I/DD, our work is not complete. There is still much more to be done. Individuals with I/DD continue to struggle to be respected, treated equally, heard, accepted, and seen as contributing members of communities across New York State and this country.

I have learned more about life and about myself through my interaction and connection with individuals with I/DD and their families. And like you, we do what we do because we believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to live a quality life. We must use our collective voices to advocate and promote inclusiveness in our communities and workplaces.

So on this 30th anniversary of the ***Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990***, let's take a moment to appreciate how far people with disabilities have come; how far our I/DD community has come. Let's reaffirm the commitment to the ADA and use this historic opportunity to remember why we must continue to advocate to ensure individuals with disabilities and their families have the services and supports they need to live life to the fullest. Together, we are achieving better and more inclusive days ahead.

Sincerely,



James Moran
Chief Executive Officer