



## **COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic for New Yorkers with Disabilities**

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### **NEWS RELEASE**

**Some 250 Persons with Developmental Disabilities receive COVID-19 Vaccines  
Delivered via Partnership of Care Design NY, SEFCU, St. Peter's Hospital, NYS  
Industries for the Disabled,  
Mohawk Ambulance and Local Collaborative  
Adds to Capital Region's Record as Best-Practice Model for NYS**

ALBANY, NY – Some 250 Capital Region residents with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and other Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) received COVID-19 vaccines today at a special vaccination clinic held at SEFCU’s Corporate Center.

This I/DD-specialized clinic is made possible by a unique partnership of community-based organizations dedicated to bringing COVID-19 vaccines to populations challenged with access to the vaccine.

Care Design NY, a statewide network of care managers providing support to people with I/DD, in partnership with Mohawk Ambulance Services, New York State Industries for the Disabled, St. Peter’s Hospital, SEFCU, and the Albany Vaccine Equity Collaborative, brought the vaccines directly to Care Design NY members living in Albany, Columbia, Greene, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Warren and Washington counties.

This I/DD-specialized clinic is designed to remove barriers for individuals with I/DD. Their unique physical and sensory needs will be taken into consideration to inform the trained personnel working at Saturday’s clinic. Extra time was allowed between vaccinations to make sure everything is fully explained, answered, and understood, using a person-centered approach with clear information for each step of the COVID-19 vaccination process.

People with I/DD have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In New York State, it is estimated the people with I/DD living in the group home setting were more than twice as likely to succumb to the virus. Additionally, people with IDD have a higher prevalence of pneumonia and other respiratory conditions, possibly leading to more severe COVID-19 outcomes. For these reasons, it is critical that people with disabilities have access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Care Design NY CEO James Moran said:** “We are very pleased with this specialized vaccination clinic that has considered the needs of individuals with I/DD and their families. The COVID-19 virus has hit our population very hard across NYS. A person with I/DD is more likely to be hospitalized from the virus and are 2.5 times more likely die than the general population due to their underlying health conditions. Therefore, we are grateful that during this unprecedented pandemic this vulnerable population has the support and care of not just Care Design NY but our community partners and government representatives. We serve 28,000 individuals with disabilities in New York State and our hope that this clinic will be a model for how underserved communities can access public health services.”

Critical to Saturday’s clinic was a network of vaccinators assembled by Mohawk Ambulance Services, whose swift deployment of resources in throughout the region have brought the vaccine directly to those who are eligible in underserved communities, seniors living in public housing, and now the I/DD community, ensuring distribution is equitable.

**David Gardner, Director of Field Support and Logistics, at Mohawk Ambulance Service, said:** “The ongoing COVID-19 vaccination process is one of the most challenging public health initiatives facing our generation. New York’s vulnerable populations must be top of mind as efforts continue across the state. Mohawk Ambulance Service is proud to join our partners and support outreach here in the Capital Region to intellectual and developmentally disabled individuals and their families.”

**Assemblymember John T. McDonald III said:** “To ensure people with disabilities are protected, we must explicitly prioritize their vaccination. Many of these individuals are at greater risk, regardless of the setting in which they reside. We must make sure that individuals with I/DD living in all settings are not overlooked and prioritized similarly to those living in group homes. Thank you to everyone who had a part in developing and planning today’s clinic. I look forward to continuing working with all to make sure the I/DD community is protected.”

**Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy said:** “Every shot in the arm of a member of our community moves us one step closer to our lives returning to some semblance of normalcy. I am happy that my advocacy has helped some of our most vulnerable residents get vaccinations more quickly and thank our partners for everything they are doing in fighting this pandemic.”

**Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan said:** “As we continue to ensure the equitable distribution of COVID vaccine, it is vitally important that we are vaccinating our intellectual and developmentally disabled neighbors. Thank you to St. Peter’s, Mohawk Ambulance, NYSID, Care Design, The Alliance for Better Health and the Capital Region Vaccine Network for working together to ensure all of our residents have access to this life-saving resource.”

**Maureen O’Brien, President and CEO of New York State Industries for the Disabled, said:** “This is a highly vulnerable population of people who have difficulty in accessing the vaccine at the regional mass vaccination sites. Over the past weeks, the Capital Region has served as a best-practice model for developing community partnerships and creative solutions to create access to the vaccine for our region’s most vulnerable.”

**Dr. Matthew Miles, M.D., who oversees St. Peter’s Health Partners’ COVID vaccine response, said:** “St. Peter’s Health Partners is pleased to be able to supply 250 vaccine doses to this clinic. Getting these critical vaccines into the arms of the most at-risk and vulnerable residents of the Capital Region is the result of the collaborative effort across the region. From SEFCU generously donating their space; to NYSID and Care Design working with The Alliance for Better Health and the Capital Region Vaccine Network to develop and plan the clinic; to the vaccinators of Mohawk Ambulance, this clinic demonstrates how it takes the commitment of many individuals and groups to ensure the continued good health and well-being of our community.”

**SEFCU President and CEO Michael Castellana, a member of and member of the Capital Region COVID Vaccine Regional Advisory Task Force, said:** “It is absolutely our pleasure to provide a safe, convenient, and comfortable venue for the intellectual and developmentally disabled to receive their COVID-19 vaccinations. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, SEFCU has been committed to doing all we can to help our members and the community. From safely providing essential banking services to supporting healthcare heroes and local nonprofits, positively changing lives has remained our top priority. This specialized vaccination clinic is the latest example of the positive impact that partnership and collaboration can have on our community, especially our most vulnerable friends and neighbors. SEFCU is proud to work with Care Design NY, Mohawk Ambulance Services, New York State Industries for the Disabled, St. Peter’s Hospital, and the Albany Vaccine Equity Collaborative on this important effort.”

**About Care Design NY:**

The largest of New York State's seven Care Coordination Organization/Health Home organizations, Care Design NY serves almost one-third of the state's intellectual/and or developmental disabilities (I/DD) population; approximately 28,000 individuals in 30 counties. Care Design NY's mission is to help individuals with I/DD get the supports and services they need to live a quality life. For more information, visit [caredesignny.org](http://caredesignny.org).

**About New York State Industries for the Disabled, Inc. (NYSID):**

NYSID is a not-for-profit membership organization with a mission of advancing employment and other opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Through a statewide network of 150+ non-profit rehabilitative Member Agencies and private sector Corporate Partners, NYSID helps secure rewarding livelihoods and reduce unemployment for individuals with disabilities. More than 5,200 jobs were realized in 2020. For more information, visit [www.nysid.org](http://www.nysid.org).

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