

Dear Family Member,

I write to ask for your help as AccessCNY and other providers of Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) services plan the restarting of services in our area.

Agencies like AccessCNY need to follow state OPWDD guidance as we begin to restart programs. We are actively sharing our ideas and concerns with OPWDD, but the voices of families are especially important at this critical moment.

Since mid-March our residential programs have followed a strict no visitor policy. This policy was necessary to keep our resident and staff safe, especially as those living in congregate living quarters have been among the most impacted by COVID-19. This policy has been exceedingly difficult on both residents and their families.

With New York in a phased reopening OPWDD has shared that residential programs are not part of the phased reopening and that we will receive separate guidance on when restriction will be lifted.

Similarly, day habilitation programs across the state were shuttered two months ago as a result of the pandemic. AccessCNY closed our program ahead of the state directive due to the obvious danger of people being unable to socially distance. We are waiting state guidance on what this program will look like in the future.

Both AccessCNY and OPWDD made difficult decision on when and how to operate programs during this pandemic. As cases decline it's time for families to play a vital role in the restarting of programs.

I ask that you have your voice heard. Ask OPWDD to:

- Include families and providers in planning as programs begin to return to normalcy.
- Be transparent and communicate openly and honestly with families and provider agencies on where plans stand.
- Realize that New York is not a monolith and there shouldn't be a one size fits all state reopen plan.
- Upstate New York providers generally operate smaller homes and day programs. These programs should open when safe, but should not have to wait for larger downstate programs to resume. Downstate providers often operate large residential facilities with dozens of residents and day habilitation programs with hundreds of people.

Please share the above message with the following:

- Our local OPWDD office by calling: xxx-xxx-xxxx or via [email@email.com](mailto:email@email.com)
- The Commission of OPWDD Dr. Theodore Kastner at: xxx-xxx-xxxx or via [email@email.com](mailto:email@email.com)



Include Families in  
Plans to Reopen OPWDD Programs

The health and safety of your family member is our utmost priority, and we welcome your help in planning a safe reopening.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Joslyn". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Paul Joslyn, Executive Director