April 4, 2020

The Self-Advocacy Association of New York State

(SANYS)

Advocacy Update

April 4, 2020
The COVID-19 crisis is difficult for people with disabilities

SANYS has been advocating with the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

We want to share some of the answers to our questions
We have heard from many people in group homes and self-direction who are worried about having enough staff.

For many people, it is hard to find staff.

We wanted to know what OPWDD is doing to help people find staff.
**OPWDD** is talking to the Federal Government

They are negotiating about rules

**OPWDD** wants to make it easier and faster to hire staff
For now, **OPWDD** is not trying to get rid of background checks. But they are trying to make it faster to hire people who already work in New York State systems.
Some self-advocates are worried about not being able to come back from the hospital to their homes.

**OPWDD** is working to find respite options for people getting out of hospitals who cannot return to their homes.
Some self-advocates are worried that they may face discrimination when getting medical care.

SANYS is working with other groups to protect people’s rights.

We are asking that **OPWDD** give hospitals guidance about people’s rights.
The federal government has already given guidance about discrimination:


**SANYS** is advocating for people’s right to have support with them in hospitals if they want
SANYS has heard from self-advocates worried they are not allowed to go outside.

You should talk to your service provider to answer any questions.

What they tell you should be based on OPWDD guidelines.

OPWDD has given some guidelines to your provider that can be found here:

OPWDD has created an information page for “providers and families”, but SANYS wants them to make one for self-advocates.

We are working with many groups to make sure information is easier to understand.
SANYS knows people have questions about topics other than OPWDD

We have heard from self-advocates who have lost their jobs

The Department of Labor has a simple document that can help you understand how you can apply for unemployment and assistance at this time:

The link below will open that document for you.

https://labor.ny.gov/ui/coronavirus-faq.shtm
SANYS also works with a self-advocacy organization called The Self-Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC).

They have put together many guides for COVID-19 that are easy to understand.

You can find all of their guides on their website at: www.selfadvocacyinfo.org/reso urce/
SANYS is working to advocate and answer questions for people with disabilities during this time.

The SANYS board of directors is working with staff and talking to OPWDD.

Keep talking to us and telling us what you’re hearing. You can reach out to SANYS staff at any time.