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Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY

CIDNY Quick Take

Governor Paterson Must Not Propose Cuts That Threaten People's Lives

People with disabilities and seniors are being hit from both sides of the political aisle. Governor Paterson is proposing 10% cuts in human service programs, including home care. Meanwhile, New York Republicans are proposing to completely eliminate all Medicaid services that are labeled "optional" by the federal government, including coverage for prescriptions, wheelchairs, physical therapy and home care, as well as 16 other essential health care services.

The Governor's proposed a Deficit Reduction Plan would cut more than \$50 million dollars from Medicaid reimbursement for personal care and home health care.



There are other ways to address the budget shortfall. It is the Governor's job to identify them and have the political courage to say "no" to non-essential pet projects. These proposals could destroy human lives and we cannot let them go through.

Not to be outdone, Republican legislators have proposed a blanket elimination of all Medicaid "optional services." These important services, not required by the Federal Medicaid program, have been included historically in New York's Medicaid package and they survived Governor Pataki's repeated attempts to cut some of them in the 1990's. They include dental services, drugs, personal care, home and community-based services, hospice, physical therapy, dentures, eyeglasses, and durable medical equipment. The legislature should reject both the Governor's and the Republicans' proposals.

It is critical that we respond quickly and inform our legislators that these proposals are unacceptable.

Find out who your representatives are by going to CIDNY's website at www.cidny.org and clicking, "Help Stop State Budget Cuts."

Tell us how these proposals will affect you and we'll post it on our website and Facebook page and send it to legislators. Email your story to us at mtrapani@cidny.org.

CIDNY's Voter Survey

Help strengthen voting rights advocacy for people with disabilities by completing CIDNY's Voter Survey after going to the polls on November 3rd. Survey results are included in testimony, letters and reports that are given to public officials to expose the need for improved voting access. Please complete the survey online by clicking the "[CIDNY Voter Survey](http://www.cidny.org)" link on CIDNY's website at www.cidny.org. You can also complete the survey by phone by calling Rima McCoy at 626-442-4146.

Policy Watch: Judge upholds civil rights for residents of adult homes

In September 2009, U.S. District Court Judge Nicholas Garaufis ruled that New York State must move 4300 people living in large "adult homes" into less restrictive settings. In New York City, adult homes have become a dumping ground for people with mental illness and the elderly who cannot afford individual apartments. These homes were meant to provide room and board in a safe environment, but in practice are so poorly run that the judge said that they are "more restrictive or 'institutional' than psychiatric hospitals." Disability Advocates, Inc., brought the lawsuit on behalf of residents in 28 facilities. The State is now required to move residents from those "homes" to supported housing, a setting offering more freedom and dignity. The U.S. Department of Justice plans to be involved, because the case may provide a model for similar situations in other states.



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STEP UP

The Successful Transition and Education Program (STEP-UP) at CIDNY serves families and youth ages 14-21 that have disabilities. We work together to build a foundation of skills for independent living. Students and their families receive information about benefits, healthcare, VESID services and can get help filing applications. They learn students' and parents' rights as they negotiate the transition from school to their post-secondary lives. They learn about resources for students with disabilities, including vocational training programs and post-secondary education options.

Families with children with disabilities who have lost their jobs or are underemployed face financial hardships. Sometimes these families qualify for benefits such as food stamps, Medicaid, SSI but do not know it. By helping them access the programs they may qualify for, CIDNY staff can alleviate an overwhelmed parent who is trying to secure their disabled children's future while trying to make ends meet.

This summer we helped students in transition learn how to care for themselves and their homes, foster healthy relationships, find and keep employment, advance their education, and create positive lives. Nothing provides us with greater satisfaction than seeing youth succeed!



Volunteer Spotlight: Alice Crespo

Alice Crespo is a relatively new CIDNY volunteer, but she is certainly not new to volunteering in general. Since 1982, she has been the driving force behind Helping Hands for the Disabled, which recruits volunteers to provide services for people with disabilities, so she has been on both sides of the coin, volunteering

and supervising volunteers. Recently retired after a 30+ year career as a Spanish court interpreter—the first blind court interpreter in the court system in New York—she has been interpreting for consumers at CIDNY during meetings of the Consumer Action Network and for the Latina Language Access Project. This energetic lady is always on the go. She does freelance work as an interpreter, volunteers with her church, the First Alliance Church, has done fundraising, wants to write a book, and is always open to other opportunities to volunteer and make a difference!

Places to Go: Queens

Looking for a place in your neighborhood where you can go to relax and read for free? Well, you could go to the bookstore, but you couldn't take the books home without paying. You can, however, at your local branch of the Queens Library. The Queens

Library has been busy these past few years consolidating, renovating and building new branches. They've revamped their website, www.queenslibrary.org.

But among all the new things they're doing, they continue to provide free reading material—and viewing and listening material, as well. They also provide quality programs for children, adults, immigrants, seniors, and other communities of interest.

Check out their website, which has listings for all the local branches. It's easy to find out what's going on in your neighborhood with just a few clicks.