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Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY

June 2017

### Public Comments on Access-a-Ride Cut Short

You may have already heard in the news or on our Facebook or Twitter page about a recent MTA board meeting. Following last month's Access-A-Ride focus group at CIDNY, about 50 Access-A-Ride users, members of the press, advocates, and allies attended the board meeting last Wednesday, May 24th. They arrived to tell their Access-A-Ride stories, share their experiences, and let the board know of their frustrations with a system thousands depend on daily. An Access-A-Ride press conference was held outside beforehand.

Users present at the meeting spoke of a system which is chronically late and a constant source of problems. "You guys get millions for this program, and something's not right here," said user Diana Moll. Brittany Wilson spoke of the problematic way Access-A-Ride routes trips, the lack of communication between drivers and users, and a taxi authorization system which needs to be improved. Access-A-Ride, she said, advises users to allow their driver 30 minutes for traffic or delay, but "most of the time that delay is not because of New York City traffic, but because of routing." She described traveling through multiple boroughs to get where she needed to go, something many users experience. "We live in an age where I can track my Uber ride and know exactly where it is; yet, for some reason, I still have to sit outside and wait for an Access-A-Ride which may not be anywhere in my vicinity," she said.

The board assured everyone that they would be able to speak if they wished. But acting Chairman Fernando Ferrer abruptly ended the public comment period with dozens still waiting to speak. The board, he said, "had to get back to important matters on our agenda." The room erupted with cries of "shame, shame" as the board attempted to continue with their agenda rather than listen to customers. Members of the board then left the room. They returned later, saying that the public comment period would continue after their meeting. Many Access-A-Ride users and their allies left in protest.

### A Taste of NYC Farmers' Markets

Susie Spodek, a representative from Grow NYC, which manages New York City's farmers' markets, joined consumers at CIDNY to give us information on getting nutritious vegetables and other products on a small budget.

She also brought samples of produce in the markets now – including applesauce made with rhubarb, sun dried tomatoes, Jerusalem artichokes and peppermint. We learned about growing herbs in small apartments and using the markets to improve our diets. Susie also explained how people on tight budgets can use SNAP benefits, Health Bucks, and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program ([www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/fmnp/](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/fmnp/)) to stretch dollars at the market. She told us that the farmers are always happy to talk about the produce they are selling and even share recipes with people visiting the markets. CIDNY will be planning tours of the Union Square market as well as a market in Queens this summer. Join us to take advantage of fresh produce and other goods. If you want to find out if you are eligible for SNAP, Health Bucks or the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, call CIDNY, 212-674-2300, and ask to speak to a benefits counselor.

### Legislative Disability Awareness Day



On May 22, 2017, 21 CIDNY consumers and staff went to Albany to participate in New York Association of Independent Living (NYAIL) Legislative Disability Awareness Day. We met with the staff of 14 elected officials. Other independent living centers from around the state participated.

CIDNY consumers shared their stories and discussed policy issues with the staff of Assembly members David Gantt, Andrew Hevesi, Kevin Cahill, Richard Gottfried, Robert J. Rodriguez, Robert Schimminger, Aravella Simotas, Michael Blake and Senators Neil Breslin, Jose Serrano, David Carlucci, Catherine Nolan, Kemp Hannon and Marisol Alcantara.

We presented our Legislative Agenda and asked the Legislators to support the bills referenced. The staff we met with noted the issues we discussed and stated they would present the bills to their legislators and inform us whether they supported them or not. Our consumers shared their personal stories related to health care, housing, education, and transportation and the staff members paid keen attention as they gained insight on how consumers were affected by

Quick Takes

## Consumer Action Network (CAN) - Queens

Wednesday, June 21, 1:00-2:00

### Join us for a presentation on the Fair Housing Act and hear:

- rights protected under the Act
- your rights as tenants;
- how to request an accommodation; and
- how to recognize discrimination.

Chris Chalfant and Tashia Lerebours, Fair Housing Act Trainers, will describe the Fair Housing Act and answer any questions you have.

Please RSVP to Eva Eason at (646) 442-4156. If you need an accommodation, such as large print or ASL or language interpretation services, please let us know by Wednesday, June 14, 2016. Refreshments will be served.

the various policies.

We asked our legislators to support:

The Elimination of the 20-visit limit on Medicaid Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Therapy.

Preserving access to quality complex rehabilitation technology for patients with complex medical needs.

Home Stability Support (HSS) Which Would Provide Rent Supplements to People with Disabilities at Risk of Eviction. One our consumers shared her story about her experience living in a shelter and that she would like to see legislation introduced to make shelters accessible and people with disabilities better accommodated to prevent secondary disabilities. Inclusive Home Design/Visitability Features in Residential Housing That Receives Financial Assistance for Construction from Federal, State, County or Local Governments. A1023 Simon / S3315 Krueger.

A Proposal to Make Discrimination by Landlords Based on a Tenant's Source of Income Illegal under State Law proposed by Assembly member Weprin.

Accessible Transportation. A.5537 (Weprin). It was a long day, but attendees were pleased to spend the day speaking with the staff of elected officials and to have their voices heard.

### Get CIDNY Mailings & Notices Right Away

If you'd like to get your CIDNY newsletter, calendar of events and alerts by email and help us save on paper and postage, it's easy. Send your email address to [info@cidny.org](mailto:info@cidny.org) and tell us to send your newsletter by email. Don't forget to spell out your full name so we know who you are. If you are already getting your newsletter by email, you don't need to contact us. If you need to receive your newsletter and other notices by regular mail, you

don't need to do a thing, we'll keep mailing it to you.

### Legislation Introduced to Provide Override for 20 visit limit on Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy in Medicaid

Assemblymember Didi Barrett, Chair of the Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities, has introduced legislation to allow people using Medicaid for their Health Coverage to get additional Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Therapy visits if their provider attests to the medical necessity of more visits. The legislature adopted a February 2011 recommendation of the Medicaid Design Team to put a hard 20 visit annual limit on these for a savings that was calculated at \$2.47 million in the 2011-2012 fiscal year. This arbitrary cap was adopted at the expense of Medicaid recipients who have been unable to maintain or regain functioning or who have required costly surgery when they cannot get a good result with only 20 PT visits.

For five years, CIDNY consumers have advocated for an adjustment to this visit limit. In our meetings this year with legislative offices, we could talk about Assembly Bill 7772, which would provide for an override based on medical necessity. One CIDNY consumer, whose Physical Therapy visits for osteoarthritis in the spine and hands had already ended in April, described her efforts at managing her pain through other means. Another consumer had benefited from Occupational Therapy following a surgery, but believes that additional Occupational Therapy could improve her ability to grasp things with her hands as she continues to drop things. The legislation was reported out of the Assembly Health Committee the day after our lobby day and was referred to the Ways and Means Committee. CIDNY has gotten the support of the Empire Justice Center and Medicaid Matters, whose clients have also been having problems with these visit limits. We will also be approaching the Governor's Office to get this issue revisited in the Executive budget. If you would like to join these efforts, please contact CIDNY's Health Policy Director at 646.442.4147 or [hsiegfried@cidny.org](mailto:hsiegfried@cidny.org).

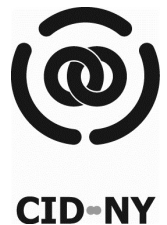
# June 2017 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 3:00 pm  <b>Writer's Workshop</b> 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 1:30 pm  <b>Queens Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 3:00 pm	<b>6</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 1:30 pm	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 3:00 pm  <b>Writer's Workshop</b> 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 1:30 pm  <b>Queens Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 3:00 pm	<b>13</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 1:30 pm	<b>14</b> <b>Credit Repair Workshop</b> 2:00-4:00 p.m.	<b>15</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 3:00 pm  <b>Writer's Workshop</b> 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm	<b>16</b> <b>Movie Night:</b> <b>Florence Foster Jenkins</b> <b>3:00-5:00</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 	<b>19 JUNETEENTH</b>  <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 1:30 pm  <b>Queens Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 3:00 pm	<b>20</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 1:30 pm	<b>21 SUMMER BEGINS!</b>  <b>CAN Meeting— Queens</b> <b>1:00-3:00</b>  <b>Housing Workshop— Queens</b> 10am-12noon	<b>22</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 3:00 pm  <b>Writer's Workshop</b> 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 1:30 pm  <b>Queens Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 3:00 pm	<b>27</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 1:30 pm	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> <b>Walk-in Day</b> 10:00 am to 3:00 pm  <b>Writer's Workshop</b> 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm	<b>30</b>	

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All events are at CIDNY, 841 Broadway, Suite 301, New York, NY 10003 unless otherwise stated. To RSVP for events, contact Eva Burgess at 646-442-4156 or [eeason@cidny.org](mailto:eeason@cidny.org).  
 If you need an accommodation, please let Eva know. For ASL interpreters, let us know one week in advance. We cannot guarantee accommodations like ASL interpreters if we do not have advanced notice.



# JUNE 2017 Events



Join CIDNY for Education and Fun

**Need help?** Walk in to get the help you need. Staff will be available during these times for housing and benefits-related help.

## Walk-In Days—Manhattan

Every Monday and Tuesday, 10:00 am to 1:30 pm  
Every Thursday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

## Walk-In Day—Queens

Every Monday  
10:00 am to 3:00 pm

## Consumer Action Network (CAN) - Queens

Wednesday, June 21, 1:00-2:00

## Join us for a presentation on the Fair Housing Act and hear:

- rights protected under the Act
- your rights as tenants;
- how to request an accommodation; and
- how to recognize discrimination.

Chris Chalfant and Tashia Lerebours, Fair Housing Act Trainers, will describe the Fair Housing Act and answer any questions you have.

Please RSVP to Eva Eason at (646) 442-4156. If you need an accommodation, such as large print or ASL or language interpretation services, please let us know by Wednesday, June 14, 2016. Refreshments will be served.

**Housing Workshop - Queens** Wednesday, June 21, 10:00 am to noon. CIDNY's 2-hour housing workshop covers: housing options: NYCHA, HPD, HUD listings; NYC Housing Connect and other programs; what you qualify for; income and family size; and how to get and go over your credit report.

Space is limited: 646-442-1520 to reserve your spot. Also, let us know if you need an accommodation like American Sign Language or large print.

## Our Popular Writer's Workshop—Manhattan

Every Thursday from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm.

## Credit Repair Workshop—Manhattan

Wednesday, June 14, 2:00pm—4:00pm

Learn effective ways to improve, repair, and manage your credit. There are no strings or gimmicks. This workshop gives you step-by-step solutions. **Please RSVP by Wednesday, June 7 to 212-674-2300.**

## Movie Night: Florence Foster Jenkins

Friday, June 16, 3:00 - 5:00 pm

Starring: Meryl Streep, Hugh Grant, Simon Helberg

The story of Florence Foster Jenkins, a New York heiress who dreamed of becoming an opera singer, despite having a terrible singing voice.

**Refreshments will be served.** Also vote for next month's movie! RSVP by Monday, June 12. Call Eva at 646-442-4156. Let her know if you need an accommodation, like Hearing Loop, or captioning. Please remember that CIDNY is a scent free office—no perfume or scented lotions, as an accommodation to our consumers and staff.



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