Quick Takes

the law. Happily, almost all the panelists mentioned accessibility as one issue that needed to be addressed early in the creation and implementation of automatic voter registration.

Making the process accessible for people who use screen readers or who need help filing in forms, ensuring that information sent between agencies and the boards of election is confidential, and ensuring that people who do not want to be registered are not registered by mistake were issues each of the states mentioned. AVR and online registration are part of modernizing the U.S. voting system. Next in line, according to the advocates, will be portable registration, which means you would be able to update and maintain your registration online when you move. Many states are also considering online voting. Panelists noted that states and advocates and policy makers must consider issues for people with disabilities as they create the process. An equally accessible option must be available to people with disabilities who cannot afford or do not have computers, any online materials and forms must be accessible to people with disabilities, and data given to any agency must be confidential and protected.

What do you think? Would registering to vote through any government agency make registration easier for you? Would you like to be able to register completely online? What do you think about online voting? These and other questions about modernizing our voting systems are being considered now. Our voices for accessibility have to be part of the discussion. For more information on this and other voting issues, contact Monica Bartley at mbartley@cidny.org or 646-442-4152.

CIDNY Goes to Albany!

On May 16, 2016, CIDNY consumers and staff went to Albany to participate in New York State Assembly Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day. CIDNY consumers shared their stories and discussed policy issues with Assembly Members Catherine Nolan, Aravella Simotas, Helene Weinstein, Philip Goldfeder, Robin Schimminger, Michaelle Solages, Michael Blake, Pamela Harris, Andrew Hevesi, David Carlucci, Kevin Cahill, Marcos Crespos and Senators Kevin Parker, Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Liz Krueger, Adriano Espaillat, Jessie Hamilton, Simcha Felder, Todd Kaminsky, Bill Perkins, Kemp Hannon, Marty Golden,
The need to preserve access to quality complex rehabilitation technology for patients with complex rehabilitation medical needs. We are asking the State to pass a law that would ensure that individuals with complex needs and chronic disabling conditions get the equipment that addresses their specific disability so they can remain mobile, safe, and healthy. Also, Medicaid Managed Care Plans should use suppliers who have at least one storefront in NY State, have certified technicians on staff, and are able to individually fit, service and repair complex rehabilitation equipment.

The need for legislation that would allow for a prescriber override of “step therapy” protocols. Some people with disabilities may have serious illnesses or chronic conditions that require a complex combination of medications, or only a particular drug is effective, or alternative drugs may have unacceptable side effects. We are asking for the State to pass a law that would add a new article to the insurance law, which gives prescribers access to a clear and convenient process to override step therapy and “fail first” restrictions when medically in the best interests of the patient.

Support Prohibition of Source of Income Discrimination. NYC has a law that protects people who receive income from government entities (such as Section 8, SSI, or SSDI) from being discriminated against when applying for housing - we are asking to put that law into the State Human Rights Law, so everyone in the State will have the same protection.

Our request to develop a policy requiring State contractors to employ people with disabilities. We are asking the State to pass a law requiring all State contractors and subcontractors to recruit and hire people with disabilities so that we can improve job opportunities. This law is similar to the national regulation that establishes a goal for contractors receiving federal contracts to achieve a 7 percent hiring rate for qualified employees with disabilities.

Access-A-Ride and Lack of Due Process. Consumers spoke about their issues with Access-a-Ride; in particular, the need for annual recertification and how Access-A-Ride denies services or does not recertify. The only appeal mechanism is through Access-a-Ride, so we are asking for outside agency to review appeals.

Create Independent Special Counsel to review deaths in custody. People with mental disabilities are at higher risk of death in custody. We urged the Legislature to support the creation of an Independent Special Counsel to investigate this occurrence.

Will NYC Have to Fix Its Curbs and Sidewalks?

Hearing set for Tuesday, May 31, on a proposed settlement in the curb cut case. We say: It isn't good enough!

On Tuesday, May 31, CIDNY will testify in federal court that a proposed settlement of our curb cut case does not meet the needs of people with disabilities. Federal Judge Daniels will hear comments on the agreement between the City of New York and United Spinal. Join us!

The settlement leaves too many people out. It:
- Does not require installation or repair of curb ramps unless or until a street is repaved - leaving large portions of the city without remedies to inaccessible sidewalks.
- Has no requirement to ensure detectable warnings on curb cuts for people who are blind or low vision.
- Does nothing to fix potholes, cracked concrete or problems where the curb cuts meet the street.
- Does not include monitoring so we can see and act if the city is not complying with the settlement.
- There are no deadlines.
- There is no clear procedure for registering a complaint. This settlement won’t do. New York City can and must do better.

If you feel strongly about the conditions of the curb cuts in NYC, join us at 12:00 pm in Courtroom 11A, 500 Pearl Street, to say NO! to this settlement. Make sure you bring a picture ID - you will need that to go through security. The accessible entrance is on 158 Worth Street.