



Quick Takes

Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
www.CIDNY.org

CID-NY

Manhattan
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July/August 2019

Special Summer Edition

This summer edition of Quick Takes covers the months of July and August. Our National Museum of the American Indian visit will be rescheduled to take place in August. For updates, please call us or sign up for email updates here: <https://www.cidny.org/join-us/>.

Ombudsman Honored at NYS Older New Yorkers' Day



[Image description: Petronella Thomas with New York City LTCOP Director Deirdre Garrett-Scott.]

Older New Yorkers' Day is an annual celebration held during Older Americans Month in May. This event, held by the New York State Office for the Aging, honors the significant contributions of outstanding Older Volunteers. Manhattan Ombudsman Petronella Thomas was recognized for her outstanding service and it was the first time that a Long Term Care Ombudsman received the award. "Ombudsmen" are volunteer advocates for people living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and family type homes. CIDNY's Ombudsmen work with residents to make sure their rights are protected, their needs are met, and any complaints they have are resolved.

Is the NY ABLE Program Right for You?

NY ABLE is a savings option for individuals with disabilities to save tax-free, similar in many ways to a 529 College Savings program. New York's NY ABLE Program permits people with a disability who had an onset before the age of 26 to save in a program that does not limit their ability to benefit from Social Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, and other means-tested benefit programs. Costs are lower than a Supplemental Needs Trust, setup is quick, and allowed expenses from the account are broadly defined. Learn more at myNYABLE.org.

CIDNY supports The ABLE Age Adjustment Act, a proposal to increase the age of onset of disability to be eligible to open an ABLE account to 46 years of age. At this time, you can be over 26 when you open an ABLE Account, but your disability must have had an onset prior to your 26th birthday. Talk to our benefits counselors about how ABLE can be part of your approach to saving while keeping benefits."

Project Open House Application Open

The home modification program for people with disabilities, Project Open House, can help make your home more accessible by removing barriers. Some of the types of work include: widening doorways, adding ramps, adding vertical lifts, accessible bathroom and kitchens, grab bars, strobe doorbells, automatic doors, or other work to increase the independence based needs of the applicant.



[Image description: Woman on stairlift.]

To be eligible, you must reside within the 5 boroughs, have a permanent disability, meet Section 8 income guidelines, and have the building owner's permission. Applications are open on July 1st. Visit nyc.gov/POH, call 311, or contact your benefits counselor for help.

Legislation CIDNY Supported Passes in Final Days of Session

The New York State Legislature completed its session on Friday, June 21st. Two bills that CIDNY advocated for passed both houses in the last few days of session and will go to the Governor for his signature.

CIDNY has advocated for several years for legislation that would prohibit the dropping of drugs from



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lists of available drugs, adding higher co-pays, or new utilization review requirements. One of the most important things a consumer checks in determining what health plan he or she will enroll in is whether the prescription drugs that they depend on are covered in the plan's formulary. If the Governor signs this legislation into law, consumers can rest assured that the reason for their choice will remain in place for the entire year for which they are committed to that plan.

A new bill that CIDNY advocated for this year will help people in need of Medicaid Managed Long Term Care. People who need more than 120 days of community based long term care services have 75 days from the date of that determination to schedule an in-home assessment with prospective MLTC plans. Scheduling that assessment can take weeks. At that assessment, if they agree, the nurse processes the enrollment which will begin the first of the next month or the following month if it is too late. If the eligible person is unable to get this all completed within 75 days, they must go back to square one and start over. All of this delay in securing care is detrimental to a person needing care. The bill would automatically assign a person unable to complete the process to a plan (taking into account consistency with any prior community-based direct care workers having recently served the recipient as well as quality performance criteria, capacity, and geographic accessibility) so that they would not have to start over.

The legislation also addresses the problem of "churning" that MLTC enrollees experience when things go wrong with the Medicaid mail renewal process. The consequences of losing MLTC coverage and being disenrolled leading to cut-off of home care services, cannot be overstated. Similarly the consequences of being "churned" off the Medicare Savings Program means the loss of \$135.50 in income a month, which is a good chunk for a low income person. This bill would stop this by automatically renewing four categories of people: 1) MLTC enrollees; 2) Mainstream managed care members receiving personal care or consumer directed personal assistance services; 3) Medicaid enrollees in the Aged, Blind, and Disabled category who don't have a spenddown; and 4) MSP recipients. CIDNY looks forward to the Governor's signature.

Long-Range Research Program Study Considers Health for *All of Us*

A new long-term medical research program study finally will bring the needs of often-overlooked populations into focus.

The ["All of Us" Research Program](#), expected to last at least 10 years, is designed to help researchers develop precision medical care based on the real-life needs of individual patients. While many large-scale research efforts tend to look only at select groups, this one hopes to involve 1 million people from the entire spectrum of society.

Elizabeth Cohn, community engagement lead for the [New York City Precision Medicine Consortium](#), said the research of relatively rare conditions can have benefits for health care in general, so broad participation of people with disabilities will have two major impacts.



[Image description: Group of people, including a wheelchair user, joining hands.]

"There's the immediate benefit of being included in research," she said, "which can be very empowering and also assist in meeting people's needs - and then, the greater vision of better health for our nation."

People who want to participate in the program can register online at JoinAllOfUs.org/together.

Jess Powers, director of communications and education for the [Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York](#), said participants will be asked to answer questions about their health, family, home and work, and they'll have options to provide electronic health records and biological samples.

"Depending on how much information people want to share; it's up to them," she said. "The idea is that this data will be anonymized and then available to researchers to make advances in medicine."



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The researchers hope people will want to be involved over time in the study, but anyone is free to opt out at any time without penalty.

Speaking not only as a health researcher but also as the mother of a child with special needs, Cohn added that this sort of comprehensive, long-term research effort is long overdue.

We're Hiring!

Do you want to work for an organization helping people with disabilities? CIDNY is hiring for multiple positions. Please check our website at <https://www.cidny.org/jobs/> for the latest postings.

CIDNY Comments on Proposed Changes to the Official Poverty Measure

The Office of Management and Budget has proposed using a different inflation adjustment to the Official Poverty Measure that would result in a lower OPM each year than would otherwise be the case with reductions growing larger each year. It would particularly impact people with disabilities who are the demographic group most likely to live in poverty.

In New York City, 35% of people with disabilities have incomes below the poverty line as it is measured now and 58% of people with disabilities live below 200% of the poverty line. We told them that before moving forward with any change to poverty line, they should undertake in-depth of research and analysis and seek public comments regarding the potential impacts on access to health insurance coverage and care, nutrition programs and food security, and other services and supports that people with disabilities need to live independent lives in the community.

Amazon Expands SNAP EBT Pilot

Amazon has expanded their SNAP EBT acceptance program to all customers in New York state. Customers can visit www.amazon.com/snap and add their EBT card to begin purchasing groceries, including free access to AmazonFresh and Prime Pantry.



[Image description: SNAP logo.]

Accessible Transportation Advocacy Update

Access-A-Ride Advocates and their allies recently claimed an important victory: as of May 30th, Access-A-Ride (paratransit) vehicles are allowed to use the bus lanes. Seen by many as a common-sense way to speed up chronically slow Access-A-Ride service, this is sure to benefit the thousands who rely on Access-A-Ride every day. Many thanks to all the advocates for making this possible by sharing your stories, testifying at MTA board meetings, and amplifying messages on social media.

Let's keep the ball rolling. Do you want to make your voice heard about Access-A-Ride issues? Speak out! New York City Transit is holding their 'NYCT& MTA Bus committee' meeting on Monday, July 22nd at 10 a.m. and the MTA has their board meeting at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, July 24. Again, all meetings take place at 2 Broadway (between Beaver and Stone streets) in Manhattan.

Cooling Centers

When the heat index is predicted to be dangerously high, New York City opens cooling centers in air-conditioned facilities to offer people relief from the heat.

Sites where cooling centers are located include:

- Libraries
- Community centers
- Senior centers
- NYCHA facilities

You should use a cooling center during a heat wave if you have no access to a cool environment, and particularly if you are at risk for heat-related illness. Cooling center facilities are managed by New York City Agency partners, who determine each site's hours of operation and level(s) of accessibility. For more information, call 311 or visit <https://maps.nyc.gov/oem/cc/inactive.html>.



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NEED HELP?

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

Walk-In Day - Manhattan



Every Monday and Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Walk-In Day—Queens



Every Monday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Important Dates

June 14 – Disability Pride Parade

5th Annual Disability Pride NYC Parade Sunday, July 14th at 10 a.m.

Join CIDNY and other members of the disability community at the Disability Pride Parade on Sunday, July 14. The theme of this year's parade is "Creativity". CIDNY would love your ideas on a theme for the CIDNY group to use. Please email your ideas to Monica Bartley at mbartley@cidny.org. We'll be gathering at Madison Square Park at 10 a.m. and marching up to Union Square where there will be a festival and celebration until 3 p.m. You'll see our members with the CIDNY banner. Come out and show solidarity as proud New Yorkers with disabilities! To RSVP, please call Laurette Hamilton at 212-674-2300.

CIDNY's Writer's Group Thursdays from 3:30-5:30 p.m.

A facilitated, non-judgmental writing group that promotes individual expression and creativity in a supportive atmosphere.

An Afternoon at the Queens Botanical Garden

July 17 at 1 pm – 2:30 pm

Meet CIDNY Staff at the Main Garden Entrance
43-50 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11355

Join us for a walk/roll through at the Queens Botanical Garden. We'll meet at the Main Entrance and enjoy exploring the garden together. For information on the Garden, you can go to <https://queensbotanical.org> or contact us at 212-674-2300 and we'll send more information to your email.

You must RSVP by Friday, June 7th by calling 212-674-2300. Please let the receptionist know if you are a wheelchair user –

Join the conversation: online at www.cidny.org; on Facebook (www.facebook.com/CIDNYInc), on Twitter (@CID_NY) and IG (@cid_ny)

the Garden staff requested that information to ensure they can accommodate everyone. If you need another type of accommodations, like ASL interpretation, please let us know as soon as possible.

BY BUS

Take Q44SBS or Q20A/B from the Bronx or Jamaica, or in Flushing.

BY TRAIN

Take the no. 7 subway or Long Island Rail Road (Port Washington line) to Main Street/Flushing. Then, take the Q44SBS or Q20A/B bus, or walk eight blocks south to QBG along Main Street.

Housing Workshops

Wednesday, July 10, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Manhattan

Wednesday, July 31, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Queens

Wednesday, August 14, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Manhattan

Wednesday, August 28, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Queens

CIDNY's 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. CIDNY is a full-service center

CIDNY Action Network (CAN) Meeting

In July we will visit state legislators in their district offices. On August 21st from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in Queens, come to learn about the meetings. Let's discuss future visits. NOTE: If you are interested in attending Albany visits, you are required to be an active member of CAN and to have participated in district visits.



Speak Out about Public Transit NYCT & MTA Bus Committee Meeting Monday, July 22, 10 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.

MTA Board Meeting

Wednesday, July 24, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at
MTA Headquarters, 2 Broadway.

There are no meetings in August.

Please arrive 45 minutes early and bring a photo ID. Upon arrival, people can choose to sign up to speak during the meeting. There is a two-minute limit for speakers. Join with us and other advocates as we make our voices heard. RSVP required.

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