

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



**SENATOR JOHN W. MANNION**  
50<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

**CHAIR**  
DISABILITIES

**COMMITTEE MEMBER**  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
CIVIL SERVICE AND PENSIONS  
EDUCATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION  
HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY

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April 26, 2021

Dr. Theodore Kastner  
Commissioner  
Officer for People with Developmental Disabilities  
44 Holland Ave.  
Albany NY 12229

Dear Commissioner Kastner:

We wish to voice our serious concerns over the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities' (OPWDD) plan to implement significant rate reductions to the voluntary residential program on May 1, 2021. Any cuts will harm the system and hamper the providers' ability to deliver the essential supports and services that individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) require.

We urge an immediate delay of a minimum of 90 days to allow for additional stakeholder input and the ability to properly explore alternative solutions.

There is clear consensus that the proposed actions are not in the best interest of residents, families, and service providers. Funding reductions could not come at a worse possible time. I/DD New Yorkers and their families have suffered disproportionately during the COVID-19 pandemic. Voluntary providers have invested millions in unreimbursed costs to protect the safety of their residents and staff due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The precarious financial position of providers will be further compounded by these cuts.

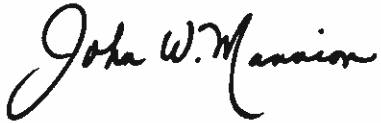
OPWDD is committed to creating a Statewide Comprehensive Plan pursuant to section 5.07 of the Mental Hygiene Law. We are confident that with substantial stakeholder engagement and consideration, this Plan will lay out a strategic vision for the future delivery of supports and services for individuals with I/DD.

We fail to see how these cuts will "preserve [these] essential community-based services," because they will do the opposite. We strongly believe that these May 1<sup>st</sup> cuts should be delayed

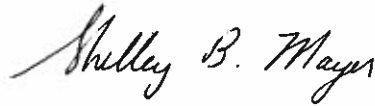


until that process is complete to ensure that decisions align with the Comprehensive Plan and ensure the viability of the service delivery system.

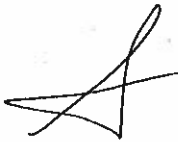
Sincerely,



Senator John W. Mannion



Senator Shelley B. Mayer



Senator Kevin Thomas



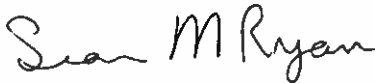
Senator Timothy M. Kennedy



Senator Brad Hoylman



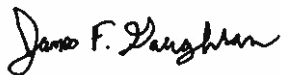
Senator Todd Kaminsky



Senator Sean M. Ryan



Senator Anna M. Kaplan



Senator James F. Gaughran



Senator Andrew Gounardes



Senator Jamaal T. Bailey



Senator Roxanne J. Persaud



Senator Jeremy A. Cooney



Senator Rachel May



Senator Michelle Hinchey



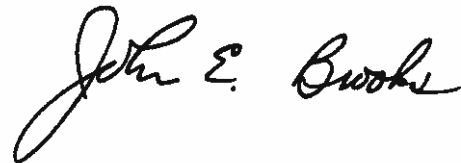
Senator Mike Martucci



Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick



Senator Samra Brouk



Senator John E. Brooks



Senator Anthony Palumbo

CC: Christopher Tavella, Deputy Secretary for Human Services and Mental Hygiene  
Tina Kim, Assistant Secretary for Health