

Governor should restore funding to assist disabled

Spring is upon us and that means it is budget time in Albany. Gov. Andrew Cuomo still refuses to restore adequate funding for people with developmental disabilities. There have been serious consequences due to the resultant cuts in services. Two of the areas hardest hit by his decision are day programs and housing for adults. As a result, there are not enough of either of these services for the many individuals who need them. Even when the situation becomes critical, people seeking services are hitting a brick wall. This lack of support is having horrific effects on individuals and their families.

It's not unusual for an individual with a developmental disability to need significant supports in order to experience a quality life. A day program is not an adult baby sitting service. The routine and structure it provides is integral to keeping the participants functioning at their optimum level. There have been cases in our area where individuals, unable to find a day program and confined to their home, have regressed to such a point that their behavior became uncontrollable and they required emergency room treatment.

Another scenario is the single parent who works to provide shelter and food for her family but must give up her job in order to care for her adult child because there are no appropriate, supervised activities available while she works. Unfortunately, these situations are not unusual. Individuals and their families are being irrevocably harmed and many barely make it through their day.

The state budget is still being crafted. The governor can restore funding for those with significant disabilities who are unable to speak for themselves. As a community, we need to raise our voices and let him know how crucial it is that we ensure that those with disabilities are cared for with dignity and respect.

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