NEW YORK
ALLIANCE FOR INCLUSION & INNOVATION

December 4, 2020

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor – State of New York
Executive Chamber- NYS Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

RE: VACCINATION PRIORITIZATION OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND THE WORKFORCE

Dear Governor Cuomo,

On behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the essential workforce who deliver supports and services to those individuals, we thank you for your ongoing leadership in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. As medical professionals and administrators, we are confident that you are mindful of the health complexities of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) when prioritizing the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine and will ensure that these individuals and the workforce employed by the not-for-profit provider agencies throughout the State are one of the first sectors to be vaccinated.

The New York Alliance for Inclusion & Innovation is a statewide association representing over 150 not-for-profit agencies in all New York communities that deliver supports and services to people with disabilities. We have been involved with a research project that has demonstrated that COVID-19 has disproportionately affected people with I/DD. People with I/DD living in congregate settings are more likely to contract the virus and because of the higher prevalence of comorbidities, are more likely to die from the disease than the general population.

Separately, the I/DD sector employs tens of thousands of direct support professionals and other staff who deliver the necessary supports and services to people with I/DD across the State. These women and men are considered essential workers and provide around the clock care to some of the State's most vulnerable and fragile people.

The NY Alliance believes that New Yorkers with I/DD and the frontline staff who deliver supports and services to the population must be explicitly listed among the priority groups to receive the COVID-19 vaccine to help ensure not only the health and safety of individuals within the field but also to contain the spread of the disease throughout their communities.

Once again, we thank you for your leadership in these unprecedented and difficult times. The NY Alliance stands ready to assist your administration other government entities to ensure that

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people with I/DD and the frontline workforce in the sector are among the priority populations to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

Sincerely,



Michael Seereiter
President/CEO

Cc: Theodore A. Kastner, M.D, M.S., Commissioner, NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities
Howard Zucker, M.D., J.D. Commissioner NYS Department of Health
Kerri Neifeld, Assistant Secretary for Human Services & Mental Hygiene

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