



Therapeutic Leave Rate Cut Call Instructions and Script

As part of our overall advocacy campaign against cuts to I/DD supports and services, we are holding all-day “phone rally” on Thursday, September 24. We ask that you take 10-15 minutes out of your day to share your story and how tell state leaders how the proposed cuts will personally affect you and your loved ones. Below are some helpful resources and instructions to assist with this effort, including contact information, a call script, talking points, and general tips.

Also, if you have not already done so, please take part in our [email campaign](#) focused on the same message. Every contact made makes a difference. We must be willing to ask our legislators to represent our needs and honor their oath to serve New York’s most vulnerable citizens.

After you make your calls, please complete this [short survey](#) so we can measure the impact of this initiative. It also helps us reach back out to legislators and build on the foundation you have laid.

Who to Contact

Governor Andrew Cuomo

[1-518-474-8390](tel:1-518-474-8390)

Find Your NYS Assembly Member

<https://www.nyassembly.gov/mem/search/>

Full Assembly Member Directory

<https://www.nyassembly.gov/mem/>

Find You NYS Senator

<https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator>

Fully Senate Directory

<https://www.nysenate.gov/senators-committees>

After you are finished contacting your Governor, Senator, and Assembly Member, you can contact other leaders in both houses if you want to “phone bank” this message. Contact information for the four legislative leaders is below. If you are excited to share this message, you can call as many as you would like.

Carle Heastie, Speaker of the Assembly

Albany: 518-455-3791

District Office: 718-654-6539

Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senate Temporary President & Majority Leader Albany: (518)

455-2585

District Office: (914) 423-4031

William Barclay, Assembly Minority Leader

Albany: 518-455-3751

District Office: 315-598-5185

Robert Ortt, Senate Minority Leader

Albany: (518) 455-2024

District Office: 716-434-0680

General Pointers and Instructions

- The goal is to inform, but also to understand where they stand on the issue and if we can count on them to fight against these cuts.
- District office numbers might be more useful at this time.
- Ask to speak to your legislator by name.
- If they are not available ask to speak with the person who oversees their policy, such as chief of staff, legislative director, etc.
- If possible, give an example of how time with families should be encouraged, benefits for quality of life, etc.
- Make the call as personal as you would like.
 - Example: replacing “families” with “us” or a person’s name. Highlighted areas in the script are places where you can and should make the message specific to you, your loved ones, and the office you are calling.
- Make it your own, adapt the script so you are comfortable and don’t rush.
- Remember to thank the person taking the call.

- If leaving a message, ask for a call back and be sure to leave your number.
- Offer to send additional information, leave The Arc New York's contact information, or both.

Philip Aydinian, Associate Executive Director of Governmental Affairs, The Arc NY, aydinianp@thearcny.org, 518-605-1379

Optional Script to Follow as Guide

Hello, my name is _____ and I am a constituent and *[supporter, mother, father, caretaker, etc.]* of *[insert who are calling on behalf of]* an individual(s) with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I am calling to voice my extreme opposition to administrative cuts from the Department of Health and Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, which would jeopardize the residential stability of *[insert who are calling on behalf of]*. While several cuts are proposed, the one that hits closest to home would reduce payments to voluntary service providers by **50%** whenever *individuals* with I/DD leave to spend time with family or are admitted to the hospital for care. This cut is planned to go into effect on October 1, which is just a week away!

This would punish *families* for staying connected and involved with *their loved ones* with disabilities, and threatens to erode the stability of our residential support system.

This is *[his/her/their]* home, not just "a bed." Our own fixed expenses do not go away when we are on vacation or in the hospital. The same is true for providers when an individual they support is away from home.

I understand that this is a difficult time. It has been for all of us. But, I feel it is my duty to inform about this urgent issue . . . I know *[he/she/you]* didn't vote for these cuts directly, but I am asking you to join with your colleagues in pushing back against this devastating change. New York state has a constitutional obligation to support their most vulnerable citizens, and *[you/Assemblymember _____/Senator _____]* took an oath to uphold the constitution.

[Where do you stand /do you know where [insert legislator name] stands] on this issue and are [you/they] willing to take a public position on it? (Please record response and report back)

Additional Talking Points

- 1) Imagine being a family member who is burdened with the knowledge that spending time with their loved one could cause financial harm and instability to the place they call home.
- 2) New York state has been intentionally underfunding our system of supports and services for years. Basic human decency dictates that this is unacceptable in any form.
- 3) These “beds” are the homes people come and go from in times of crisis or for connection – homes they have a right to return to. This cut would jeopardize that basic security

Some Technical Details (should they ask)

- This is part of a package of three cuts to certified residential programs: eliminating reimbursement for vacancies, and halving funding for therapeutic leave and retainer days.
- On May 27, without any discussion or notice to the provider community or to the families they support, the Department of Health (“DOH”) announced proposed cuts in reimbursement for IRA and ICF residential programs by eliminating the occupancy adjustment resulting from vacancies, and slashing reimbursement by 50% for retainer days when residents are in the hospital or are visiting family. The proposal would also impose an annual “cap” of 96 therapeutic leave days, after which reimbursement would be reduced to zero. This action would remove over \$230 million from providers already besieged with losses from the pandemic.
- Implementation of the cuts will require amendments to DOH rate setting regulations, which have yet to be filed. So there might be time to stop them if legislators push back