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April 4, 2020

Roger Bearden
Executive Deputy Commissioner
Office for People with Developmental Disabilities
44 Holland Ave
Albany, NY 12229

Dear Mr. Bearden,

In this time of crisis, it is essential that staff focus on keeping the people we support safe and sustaining the services they rely on. As discussed, we have advised our Chapters not to respond to the Agency PPE Review being conducted by your Division of Quality Improvement. Instead, we will work directly with OPWDD to communicate our needs collectively as The Arc New York.

To date, we have secured limited supplies to meet the most critical and immediate needs of our Chapters. However, Chapters in every region of the state are already being impacted by COVID-19. It is difficult, if not impossible, to anticipate how rapidly the need for critical Personal Protective Equipment will escalate.

The Arc New York will stay in close contact with OPWDD regarding the impact of COVID-19, and our capacity to respond as cases increase across the state. We appreciate your intent to ensure providers have adequate PPE to protect our dedicated staff and the New Yorkers we support. Chapters will continue to report COVID-19 cases to OPWDD, and we will continue to make our best effort to secure supplies for our Chapters. We will call on you for resources only where we are unable to meet need ourselves.

Thank you for your partnership in addressing this emergency.

Sincerely,

Mark van Voorst
Executive Director
The Arc New York

cc: Dr. John Kowalczyk, President, The Arc New York