July 24, 2017

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As you may know, over the past several years the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) has worked to offer New Yorkers with developmental disabilities and their families more control, flexibility and opportunities for innovative support customized to their abilities and needs.

This year, OPWDD developed a multi-year housing strategy to ensure that individuals seeking residential supports, including those living at home with family, will have supports available to meet their needs. We have helped more people self-direct their supports, leading to thousands more individuals with developmental disabilities taking greater control of their services. And, we have worked to help New Yorkers with developmental disabilities to find employment, in conjunction with the Governor’s Employment First Commission.

While these actions have led to great progress in OPWDD’s system, there is still much we would like to do to increase flexibility and choice. Individuals, families and service providers agree that individualized services and not one-size-fits-all solutions are the way to the future. While we have increased person-centeredness, taking the next step requires new approaches to transform.

An important step in this transformation is People First Care Coordination, an initiative of OPWDD and the Department of Health, to offer care coordination that integrates healthcare and community services—in addition to OPWDD-funded long-term support services—in a single life plan for each person served. While not impacting the intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) supports a person receives, People First Care Coordination offers new opportunities for person-centered planning and integrated supports for people with complex needs.

To support this initiative, OPWDD is seeking a change to the authority under which Home and Community Based Services are delivered. This change will be effective January 1, 2018 pending approval from the federal government.

This transition is necessary for moving into the next phase of OPWDD’s transformation, allowing for the implementation of Care Coordination Organizations, operating under the federal Health Homes program in a conflict-free environment, and establishing a pathway to managed care.

New York State’s highest priority is to ensure that individuals and families will have continuity of care and existing plans of care will remain in place as this transition occurs. New York State’s draft application for this change, and instructions for submitting comments, can be found at this link:

http://health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/medicaid_health_homes/idd/draft_idd_1115 waiver.htm
Comments will be accepted until August 21, 2017. OPWDD will be scheduling a stakeholder briefing to review the application in detail and more information regarding date and time will be available shortly.

Sincerely,

Jason A. Helgerson
Medicaid Director
New York State Department of Health

Kerry A. Delaney
Acting Commissioner
New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities