



NEW YORK
**ALLIANCE FOR
INCLUSION & INNOVATION**

Strength Together

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT
S.8592 (M. of S. Ortt) and A.10708 (M. of A. Gunther)

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to transportation of patients

The New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation (New York Alliance) supports S.8592 and A.10708, legislation to allow people with intellectual and developmental disabilities more opportunities for transport to and from various settings. Current law, while erroneously protective in nature, limits the transport of people receiving services based on gender and therefore, oftentimes individuals are not allowed to receive transportation services because an agency is short on staff due to the current workforce shortages.

The New York Alliance is a statewide association representing 175 not-for-profit provider agencies serving people with disabilities. The New York Alliance envisions a society where people with disabilities are contributing citizens with equal rights and the ability to live full, productive and meaningful lives. The association is the result of ongoing efforts to merge two associations: the New York State Association of Community and Residential Agencies and the New York State Rehabilitation Association.

While well intentioned at the time current law is rather dated (the 1920s) and restrictive. It requires that one gender transport an individual of the same gender when transportation is needed. At that time, people resided in institutions unlike today where the majority of individuals with disabilities live and thrive in their communities. As such, people's needs have significantly changed. Their lives depend on reliable and flexible transportation on a daily basis to attend medical and other appointments, get to and from work as well as job training and participate in social activities outside of their home environment. Without the proposed statutory set forth by S.8592 and A.10708, transportation will be limited. To exacerbate this limitation, the I/DD sector is facing a severe workforce shortage which means the lack of a statutory change would lead to far more restricted access to transportation for people with I/DD.

To accommodate the concerns of those who lack a comfort level with the statutory change, the legislation includes a provision to provide a person with the choice to request an individual of the same gender to provide transportation. We believe this provision addresses the person-centered values of the system and offers an added ease to this proposed important change to current law.

The New York Alliance applauds Senator Ortt, Assemblywoman Gunther and the NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities for this progressive measure. We wholeheartedly support S.8592 and A.10708 and urge passage of the bill in the State Senate and State Assembly.

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