

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS: BIOGRAPHIES FOR PRESENTERS

Biography

Roger Bearden, Special Counsel for Olmstead

Roger Bearden serves as the Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Special Counsel for Olmstead, where he is responsible for directing the activities of the Olmstead Plan Development and Implementation Cabinet. The Olmstead Cabinet issued its final report in October 2013, which is available on the Governor's Olmstead website at www.governor.ny.gov/olmstead/home. Mr. Bearden previously served as Chair of the New York State Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities.

Prior to joining the Cuomo administration, Mr. Bearden served as Director of the Disability Law Center of the New York Lawyers for the Public Interest in New York City. He was responsible for supervising project directors and program staff, and served as lead attorney on major law reform cases, including cases seeking community integration for persons with mental illness residing in nursing homes and adult homes.

Mr. Bearden also served in 2009 as Chief Health Counsel to New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane, who was Chair of the Senate Health Committee. In that role, Mr. Bearden led Senate staff negotiations on the *Family Health Care Decisions Act*, which allows family members or other surrogates to make major medical decisions for incapacitated individuals who did not previously designate a health care agent or provide instructions.

Mr. Bearden graduated from Brown University and Harvard Law School before clerking for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. He is married to Erin Tobin and the couple has three children.

Biography

Christopher Liuzzo, Former Associate Executive Director

Christopher Liuzzo was educated at Rutgers University (BS), Syracuse University (MS) and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (MBA), where he earned the W. Franklin Spafford Prize for academic excellence. His work in the field of Intellectual Disabilities is grounded in values informed by Social Role Valorization and person centered practices. He has played numerous advocacy and administrative leadership roles since the mid 1970's. His work includes the co-founding of advocacy organizations dedicated to individualized supports. The New York State Independent Living Association honored him with its System Advocacy Award for his efforts in advancing supported employment. Among his major interests is the reinvestment of resources from congregate settings, such as sheltered workshops and group homes, to individualized and self-directed supports. He recently retired from his position as Associate Executive Director of the Arc of Rensselaer County (New York). He is especially interested in advancing life sharing arrangements between people with and without disabilities.

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Ravi Dahiya, Associate Executive Director for Program Operations and Quality Improvement at Independence Residences, Inc.

Ravi Dahiya is the Associate Executive Director for Program Operations and Quality Improvement at Independence Residences, Inc. (IRI), a non-profit located in New York City, serving over 1500 individuals, both children and adults, with Developmental Disabilities. He has worked with people with disabilities for over 25 years, starting out as a Camp Counselor in the summers and a Direct Service Professional thereafter. He has an MPA and a MS (abandoning a MBA along the way, much to his wife's chagrin).

Mr. Dahiya has primarily worked in residential settings and understands that people with disabilities have the ability to live as everyone else, with the right amount of supports, available at the right place at the right time. The use of technology is one of the many strategies available to staff at Independence Residences, Inc. to allow that to happen. He and the staff are focused on making this "dream turn into a reality" for the people that IRI serves.