



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, New York State recognizes the contributions of people with developmental disabilities and that ongoing support for new and expanded opportunities will further enrich their lives; we are committed to ensuring their acceptance, inclusion, and rights in all areas of life and to empowering them to achieve their full potential, their personal and professional goals, and their lifelong aspirations; and

Whereas, developmental disabilities include neurological, sensory, metabolic, intellectual, and degenerative disabilities, and the diverse community of people living with developmental disabilities bring valuable knowledge and skills to our workforce and entire society; and

Whereas, New York State will never tolerate unjust and discriminatory treatment of people with developmental disabilities stemming from harmful social attitudes and stereotypes, demonstrated through the "Look Beyond My Developmental Disability" anti-stigma campaign launched in 2023 that directly resulted from legislation signed into law in 2022; and

Whereas, New York State fully supports the rights of people with developmental disabilities to engage in and experience high-quality, person-centered services, meaningful relationships, good health, personal growth, and opportunities to live and work in the most integrated settings possible, within communities of their choice; and

Whereas, people with disabilities have a strong advocate in the New York State Office of the Chief Disability Officer, created in February 2022 to ensure that all people with disabilities, regardless of their type or degree of disability, are well-represented with a determined and effective voice in making policy recommendations and by interacting with disability organizations and individuals with disabilities; and

Whereas, the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) administers and oversees essential services for those with developmental disabilities; in partnership with self-advocates, parents, family members, volunteers, staff, government officials, community members, service providers, and others who have worked tirelessly over the years, OPWDD continues to transform New York State's service delivery to a community-based system that ensures people with developmental disabilities have greater independence, inclusion and full participation in their communities, and a more involved role in guiding their lives; and

Whereas, the New York State Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD) was created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, and is one of 56 such state councils in the nation; CDD's mission is to enhance the lives of New Yorkers with developmental disabilities and their families by conducting and supporting advocacy, systems change, and capacity-building efforts through programs that promote self-advocacy, participation, and inclusion in all facets of community life, with its work guided by core values and a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion; and

Whereas, March is designated as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and New Yorkers join to support the goals of this observance, celebrating the accomplishments of people with developmental disabilities and recognizing their contributions as valued and productive members of society; this year's theme, "A World of Opportunities," reflects our commitment to creating a world where everyone has the chance to thrive and achieve success, as we continue to respond to the needs of people with developmental disabilities and work with them and their families to further improve their lives;

Now, Therefore, I, Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim March 2024 as

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

in the Empire State.



Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany on this fifth day of March in the year two thousand twenty-four.

Kathy Hochul
Governor


Secretary to the Governor
Karen Persichilli Keogh