

The Independent

SPRING 2017

The Community Newsletter of Independence Care System

AUTOMATING INTAKE AND MEDICAID RECERTIFICATION

You know how waiting to sign papers can slow down getting something done? Well, those days may be over. What has always taken hours or even days can now take just seconds.

ICS recently started using new online software, SignNow, to make it easier for you to sign forms and speed up important documentation processes, like enrollment and Medicaid recertification. SignNow allows ICS staff to request electronic signatures on forms and documents any time or anywhere. All you need is an email account and internet access on a smartphone, tablet or computer.

This system is safe, secure, legal and fast.

This is just one of the many automation innovations ICS has added to make our processes more efficient. In the last year, for example, all ICS referrals to Intake have come through our online Web Referral Form (www.icsny.org/make-a-referral).

In the past, most referrals for members were sent over fax lines. Intake agents would have to find the faxes, decipher the data on them, and input the data manually into the care management database. Now the prospective member or their referrer can input the data directly into the online form, eliminating duplicated work and reducing errors dramatically. Online referral can cut days from the enrollment process and allow ICS to track it in real time.

Automation at ICS and at the Human Resources Administration, the government agency that processes Medicaid enrollment and recertifications, has reduced legwork for ICS staff, as well, eliminating much of the need to literally run paperwork from our offices to HRA.

“We’re trying to make the member experience smooth,” says Yitz Twersky, ICS Director of Administration. “We are almost paperless as a department. Many younger members have technology, and they are eager to use it.”

Yitz suggests that members or caregivers of members who want to take advantage of this technology be sure to give your ICS care manager your email address. You can also send an email to info@icsny.org with a message to add your email to our database. We will not share your email with other organizations but will use it exclusively for purposes of communicating about ICS policies, procedures and programs.

Mariama Barry, ICS member since 2013. Read her story on page 8.

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257 Park Avenue South
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New York, NY 10010

Member Centers:

25 Elm Place, 5th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201

400 East Fordham Road
10th Floor
Bronx, NY 10458

Discussions are lively at Member Civics League meetings.



“Some have made clear that they want Medicaid spending cut drastically, believing it to be a drain on the deficit. Politically, it will be difficult for them to do that. But it would be wise to expect them to try and try again.”

**From the Desk of Rick Surpin,
ICS President**

The attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA, a.k.a. “Obamacare”) failed by a large margin in the House of Representatives in March. What does this mean for Medicaid and for ICS? Honestly, no one knows for sure.

If the American Health Care Act of 2017 (AHCA)—the failed bill—had become law, it would have ended Medicaid as an eligibility-based entitlement

drastically, believing it to be a drain on the deficit. Politically, it will be difficult for them to do that. But it would be wise to expect them to try and try again. They may decide to focus legislation on “reforming Medicaid,” to give states a choice between a “per capita cap” or a “block grant” system as the AHCA would have done—either of which would cut the amount each state receives without telling them how to spend it.

In either scenario, the amount available for people who rely on Medicaid, including our members, would be smaller. This would mean less money available for overall care, but in particular, for home care. That could be a disaster for some ICS members. It could endanger your health and independence.

We just don’t know yet what the threat-level against Medicaid is. We do know it is different from what it was before Election 2016, and not for the better.

If you feel this issue concerns you and you want to stay informed about it, please consider becoming part of the ICS Member Civics League. This group meets each month to discuss issues of concern to people with disabilities and what to do about them. See the back page for upcoming meetings. You should know you have a community of peers to take on tough issues with you. You are not alone!



and limited the money states have to provide services. That would have made paying for people with high needs—people like our members—much more difficult for the simple reason that there would be less Medicaid money to go around.

So doesn’t the failure of the AHCA mean Medicaid as we know it is safe for now? Not necessarily.

Some in Congress and in the administration have made clear that they want Medicaid spending cut

STAFF PROFILE

Anna Fay, Senior VP, Independent Living Services

You might know Anna Fay as a warm, super-helpful advocate and facilitator of the Member/Participant Advisory Council.

You may not know that she is a veteran of some of the most important achievements of the disability rights movement to date. In the era before curb cuts and accessible buses could almost be taken for granted, Anna was involved in the protests, lobbying efforts and coalition building that brought civil rights for people with disabilities from obscurity in the early 1970s into the mainstream of American life.

At age 7, just as she was starting her second grade year, Anna ran home excitedly to tell her mother that she had been advanced to the third grade. A week later, she was in the hospital with polio, and her career as a school girl came to an abrupt end.

At a time before children in wheelchairs had the right to attend school, Anna would get all her elementary, middle school and high school education from teachers who visited her at home, often no more than five hours a week.

The classroom experience was something she yearned for, so after finishing high school courses and

passing her Regents exams, Anna resolved to go to community college to study medical administration, no matter the barriers she might find as a person using a wheelchair.



Anna Fay tells her story on ICS's podcast series, *Independence Radio*.

“My parents, and my mother in particular, would say to me, ‘We’re not always going to be here,’” Anna recalls. “She had an absolute right to say it, and it was important to say it, but it always threatened the hell out of me. ‘We’re not always going to be here and you need to figure out how you’re going to make it.’”

Her experiences as a medical administrator and political activist came together when Anna joined ICS as first a board member and then

Senior Vice President of Independent Living. “I thought, this is really interesting because ICS was kind of outside the walls of the hospital, and I had always been inside the walls fighting for what was outside the walls.”

You can learn more about Anna by listening to her conversation with host Stephanie Wallace on Independence Radio: soundcloud.com/icsny/anna-fay-a-life-of-activism.

Come visit us online!
www.icsny.org

Read weekly blog posts at
www.icsny.org/blog

Get The Independent in Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Korean, Haitian Creole and Italian

Eye on Members

FAQ

I'm a caregiver of a member. Can I attend the Member/Participant Advisory Council meeting?

Yes, you can! The Council is a group of interested members and caregivers who meet at least four times a year to provide input and feedback about how ICS is doing. We put our heads together to solve problems within the organization and in the community affecting the lives of our members. For more information, contact Manager of Social Programs Latricia James at 1.718.907.1622 or latricia.james@icsny.org.

WHAT'S NEW?: SOMETHING COOKING IN BROOKLYN

A lot of you have been asking for a cooking class for some time now, and we want to give you your wish. First, we want to know more about what kind of cooking you're interested in. Our Brooklyn Member Center is equipped with a range. We don't have an oven, so, alas, baking cookies and pizzas is out of the question. But anything that can be made on top of a stove is fair game. If this is something you'd like to participate in, contact Latricia James at 1.718.907.1622 or latricia.james@icsny.org. Tell her your level of experience in the kitchen and what kind of cuisine you'd most like to learn about.

Learning how to cook is fun, and best of all, you get to sample the subject matter!



James Stone,
ICS member since 2011

“I like to come here. I meet other people in chairs like me.”

MEMBER COUNCIL UPDATE

At the December 2016 Member/Participant Advisory Council meeting, Director of External Communications Regina Weiss spoke about the ICS Member Civics League (MCL), which was formed to give members and non-members a forum to discuss issues important to them (e.g., housing, home care, employment, entitlement programs, voting rights, etc.) and learn how to effectively advocate for them. Regina told members about an upcoming meeting at which representatives from the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) would be speaking about the city's 10-year plan to increase the stock of affordable, accessible housing. She encouraged Council members to come and ask questions of the panel and to consider joining the MCL, which meets every month at ICS Brooklyn, generally on the first Friday. (For more info, see Community Corner on page 14.)

The MCL came up again at the February 2017 meeting, when Director of Member Communications Chris Pierson reported on a NY State Assembly Hearing on the home care workforce that many MCL members and others from ICS attended and at which several testified. (More information about the hearing is on page 11.) The December MCL meeting on housing, it

turned out, was very lively and occasionally heated when members discovered that “affordable housing” is unaffordable to most ICS members—the lower annual income limit to apply for most units (\$28,000) is nearly double what some members take in. Members said they felt “invisible” to the city. The good news is that the HPD representatives saw and heard our members and have promised to work on a plan for this population. MCL is also working on actions to make members’ issues better known to policy makers at all levels of government.

The next Member/Participant Council meeting is listed on the calendar on page 16 of this issue.

ICS FAST FACTS!

ICS has more than **6,700 members** in four NYC boroughs.

The zip code with the most ICS members is **11235** (Brighton/Manhattan Beach) with **265!**

The **average** MLTC member in NYS needs **less than 28 hours** of home care a week.

39 percent of ICS members need **29 or more hours** of home care a week!

What do you want to know about ICS? Send your **fast fact requests** to theindependent@icsny.org

Debra Barr,
ICS member since 2006
and a regular in ICS art classes

“I like to paint. I didn’t even know what I could do until I came here and did it!”

MEMBER MAILBAG

We want to hear from you!

Please email feedback to theindependent@icsny.org. Or mail your comments to Christofer Pierson, Independence Care System, 25 Elm Place, Fifth Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

THE ADVOCATE

Have questions about ICS membership? How about non-ICS issues like Social Security, employment, accessible housing, etc.? Where do you go to get answers to these questions?

You can get answers to all these questions right here, from The Advocate! We will answer you directly and here in *The Independent*.

Please send your questions by email to theindependent@icsny.org or in a letter to *The Independent*, Independence Care System, 25 Elm Place, Fifth Floor, Brooklyn NY 11201.

We want to know what’s on your mind!



There's a Hack for That!

As a rehab engineer, I spend my time using a range of low- and high-tech solutions to help our members do more of the things that are important to them and live more independently.

This involves creating personalized assistive technology—from simple adaptations to fully custom-made assistive devices.

It might mean adapting something so it can be controlled by a person's voice, their eye movements, or signals sent from their central nervous system to their muscles. We might use anything from fancy fiber-optic sensors to a member's smartphone, or different kinds of adaptive switches. Even simple (i.e., non-electronic) mechanical adaptations can make a big difference.

Being able to function in your own home is key to independent living.

A while back, I realized that refrigerator doors, which can require a bit of muscle to open, can pose problems for some people with disabilities and older adults with decreased body strength or balance problems. I decided to see if I could create a motorized door opener that was easy to use and simple to install. My solution uses a button to activate a gear that rotates a lever, pushing it against a plate so that the door gently opens. You can see my device in action here: <https://youtu.be/zHEQ8wWwi3k>.

Moving Objects with the Eyes

The constant question I face is how to bridge the gap between what members want to do and what they can do.



Bob Paradiso talked about assistive technology for the home with Independence Radio host Stephanie Wallace. Hear the show on soundcloud.com/icsny.

Sometimes an off-the-shelf product exists to meet the member's needs. In other cases, some simple rewiring can make something accessible. When these are not options, that's where I can really help—and where I get to do my most interesting work.

I created a system that allows a person with very limited mobility to use eye movements to control a motorized wheelchair and a motorized grabber that can pick up and move small objects. This system also allows eye movements to work an environmental control unit that turns on and off household objects like lamps and fans. (You can see a video of me demonstrating the system with these devices at <https://youtu.be/Z7sO5Mrc1qc>.) While these were quick experiments needing more refinement, they demonstrate how eye- or voice-controlled solutions can be set up quickly

ICS Rehab Engineer Bob Paradiso explains how he uses technology to increase members' independence.

and inexpensively, dramatically increasing a person's independence.

Depending on someone's needs, conditions, and what they want to do, a solution usually presents itself: standard remote control devices can be replaced with ones that are easier to use; switches on devices that are difficult to manipulate can be adapted to make them usable or replaced with a different type of mechanism.

Remote Control

For example, many remote control devices used to operate wheelchairs, as well as audio, video or other electronic equipment, use infrared light signals that transmit a different code for each function of a TV, DVD, wheelchair, lamp, game or other device. If a remote control isn't practical for someone with limited use of his or her hands, we can swap in another object that transmits those same signals but that the member is able to use. Something designed to be controlled by hand can be altered for use by someone who can instead move a foot, head, arm, mouth or other part of their body.

Sometimes altering the device or its wiring is not an option. In these cases, we look for ways to bridge the gap between the person and the object they want to use with another device. Often this can be done using universal button pushers, which are very adaptable, can control anything that uses buttons, and can themselves be controlled however desired: by voice, eye movement, switch, or smart-phone, for example. Radios, a hospital bed, a heating and

air conditioner unit—really anything that has buttons—can be adapted using this tool.

Through my experiments, I've learned that all kinds of things are possible with a little bit of effort. I've always been interested in taking things apart and seeing what else I could get them to do. My job at ICS allows me to put my skills to good use.

Learn More

- If you're interested in Bob's services, talk to your care manager! He or she can put in a service request for Bob to come to your home.
- Read more about Bob's work here: www.icsny.org/theres-a-hack-for-that.
- Listen to Bob's conversation with Stephanie Wallace on Independence Radio: soundcloud.com/icsny/bob-paradiso-assistive-technology-in-the-home.

ICS
UNIVERSITY

Do-It-Yourself Assistive Technology from Bob Paradiso

Learn about how to use technology to make life better!

- Tuesday, June 6, ICS Brooklyn. 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.
- Friday, June 16, ICS Bronx. 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.

For more details, visit Facebook.com/icsny, email chris.pierson@icsny.org, or call 1.646.653.6279.

In June 2013, Mariama Barry, then 30 years old, arrived in New York for an international conference on disability. She loved what she saw—the tall buildings, the diverse crowds of people, the wide sidewalks with curb cuts!

“I found it very agreeable—formidable!” she says in her French-accented English. She decided she wanted to stay.

Mariama was born in Conakry, Guinea, in West Africa.

A bout of childhood polio paralyzed her lower body. “I used braces, never a wheelchair,” she says. “Conakry is not wheelchair-friendly. The streets and buildings are not accessible. Except for my two sisters, there was no help to get around and go to school.

“Guinea does not have a disability rights movement,” she explains. “Disability is considered

a shame for the family.”

Being smart and ambitious,

Mariama did not let her disability stop her from getting a good education. She has a master’s in law from UNIC Université in her hometown. But despite her degree, she found it difficult to find work.

She did not come to New York intending to stay, but when she decided to, she was lucky to have the invitation to stay with a friend of the family, whom she calls “aunt,” in the Bronx.

Mariama joined ICS in 2014, and within a year, the Rehab Department had fitted her for a new power wheelchair. She was thrilled! “It’s so amazing,” she said. “I can move anywhere! It’s very comfortable. I am so happy with it!”

The only place she couldn’t move around freely in

her wheelchair, she found, was her aunt’s Bronx apartment.

Not being able to find an affordable, accessible apartment, Mariama was able to get a space at Barrier Free Living, an accessible shelter on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. She has been there almost three years now. She’s still looking for a place of her own.

Meanwhile, Mariama is working hard on perfecting her English in preparation to go back to school. She plans to get another law degree.

“Sometimes she worries that it is taking a long time to find a place,” says Social Worker Corey Rojas, Mariam’s care manager. “But she fights that feeling and remains hopeful that she will continue moving forward to achieve her goals.”

Bonne chance, Mariama! Good luck!

Mariama Barry, a native of Guinea, hopes she will achieve her goals in her adopted home of New York.



Health and Prevention

CO-LOCATION: USING TELECOMMUNICATION FOR BETTER HEALTH

ICS's new co-location program is helping us help members get the most out of their home care by using telecommunication to keep them healthy and independent.

An extension of a 2015 pilot program funded by New York State, co-location improves linkages between ICS care management and our partner home care workers to reduce preventable hospital admissions, readmissions and ER visits among our members.

How does it work?

Many ICS members are assigned a home care worker (HCW) through our partner agency JASA. The HCW is the first line of defense against an escalating health issue. She is the program's eyes and ears, watching for

signs of urinary tract infections, skin ulcers, or other dangerous symptoms. She is supervised by a clinical manager and senior aide who are part of the JASA team. Behind the scenes is an ICS care manager—Senior Social Worker Emily Morgan—on site at JASA coordinating the member's health care and working closely with the JASA team.

The senior aide supports the member and the HCW. She resolves home care issues a member may have, distributes telehealth (telecommunication for health care) devices to certain members, and trains the HCW as needed. The clinical manager supervises the senior aide and manages the telehealth devices.

Telehealth may be the most striking component in the co-location program. As in the 2015 pilot, the program uses Phablets—part smartphone, part tablet—to create a virtually instantaneous communications channel between the HCW and the senior aide and clinical manager, keeping the team informed of the member's health in real time. The HCW uses the device to answer simple questions about the member's health

status. If everything is stable, the questionnaire wouldn't raise any flags. But if a question draws a change in answer from day to day, an immediate alert is sent to the care management team. The proper course of action is then taken to protect the member's health, whether it's a home visit, doctor visit, or change in services.

While the idea of co-location is still fairly new, we have already seen some success in reducing the number of members at risk for hospitalizations, rehospitalizations and ER visits. The program's reach has grown tremendously and has provided ICS with a unique multi-dimensional perspective of the home care worker, the agency and the member. The home care worker interacts with the member every day and is therefore most aware of what the member needs.

There is a constant feedback loop between the homecare agency and ICS on the member's needs, leveraging the "on-the-ground" experience of the home care worker to better understand the member's needs. Altogether, co-location allows for more member-centered service.



*Director of Community Health Services
Ana Collado*

Don't Lose Your ICS Services!

When it's time to renew your Medicaid coverage, act promptly!

Every year ICS members lose services because they don't respond when ICS contacts them about renewing their Medicaid coverage. The State of New York requires that most people who have Medicaid renew their coverage each year by proving their eligibility, which requires filing forms and documents with the State. ICS works hard to make the process as easy as we can for our members, but it requires members to take certain steps.

About six weeks before your Medicaid renewal is due at the State Medicaid office, you will receive a package in the mail from ICS with these items:

- A letter with instructions and the deadline for returning the required paperwork to ICS
- A list of documentation required

for recertification, with samples and examples

- A prepaid, ICS-addressed return envelope to use to mail ICS your completed paperwork

After we send your Medicaid renewal package, you may also get phone calls or text messages reminding you of the deadline for returning your documents.

All you have to do to ensure a smooth renewal of your Medicaid coverage and continuation of your services is complete the documentation and return it to ICS in the envelope we provide by the deadline shown on the letter.

If you are having trouble or have any questions about the forms and documents, the instructions include the name and contact information for the ICS

Medicaid eligibility expert who is assigned to your case. Just call or email that person and they will be happy to help you. Your care manager can also help.

If ICS does not receive your documents by the due date, someone will call to see if you need help. If you ever receive a message about your Medicaid renewal from someone at ICS, it's important to return that call so that we can help you make sure your Medicaid coverage is kept up to date.

Nobody loves doing paperwork, but keeping your Medicaid coverage up to date is an important way of taking care of yourself and making sure you get what you need to remain independent. And helping you stay independent is our most important goal!

INDEPENDENCE RADIO

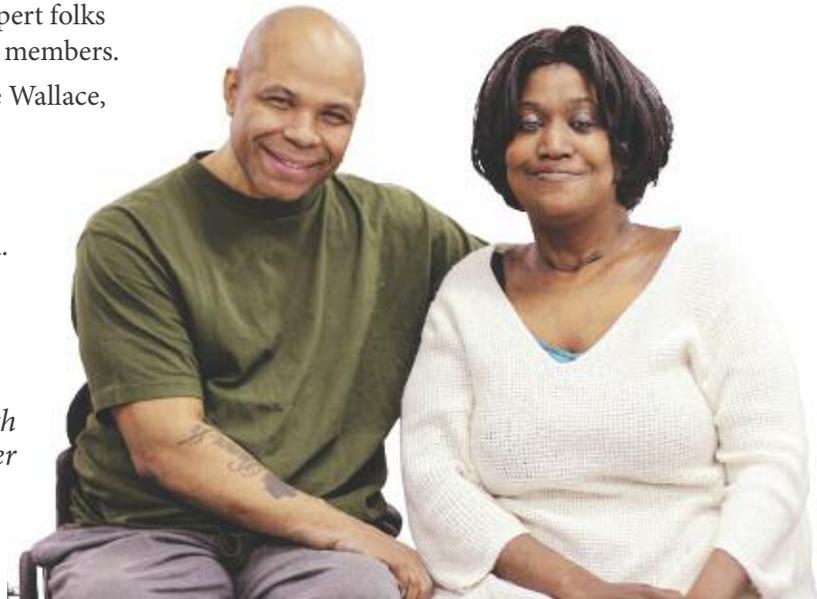
Independence Radio is a series of podcasts for the ICS community featuring lively conversations on health, disability, aging well, advocacy, the arts and more. ICS member Stephanie Wallace asks the questions and leads the discussions. Her guests include interesting and expert folks in the ICS community, including staff, leadership and members.

You can listen to Independence Radio, with Stephanie Wallace, at soundcloud.com/icsny.

If you're unable to access the podcasts online and would like to hear them, please call 1.646.653.6279 and we will do our best to make them available to you.



Stephanie Wallace with guest Damon Rozier



COMMUNITY CORNER

A listing of activities and opportunities to meet with, speak with, support and get support from other members of the ICS community.

ICS MEMBER GROUPS

Women's Empowerment Initiative Group

For ICS members who are women striving to inspire, educate, and build self-esteem and advocacy. Light refreshments served.

Light refreshments served.

Every other Friday, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., at ICS Brooklyn.

If interested in joining, please contact your care manager by calling Member Services at 1.877.ICS.2525.

Men's Group

A support group aiming to build a united brotherhood, to advocate and achieve life goals in the community inside and outside of ICS, to let men know that disability doesn't stop them. Light refreshments served.

Every other Friday, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., at ICS Brooklyn.

If interested in joining, please contact Lenford Bryan at 1.347.446.0764 or Latricia James at 1.718.907.1622.

Rainbow Connection

For ICS members who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning their sexuality, as well as friends and family and any member who is LGBTQ supportive. Light refreshments served.

Every other Wednesday, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at ICS Brooklyn.

If interested in joining, please contact Latricia James at 1.718.907.1622.

Member Civics League

The ICS Member Civics League is a forum for New Yorkers with disabilities who want to work and learn together to advocate for change. Light refreshments served.

Every first Friday of the month, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., at ICS Brooklyn (dates and times subject to change).

If interested in joining, please email MCL@icsny.org or call Chris Pierson at 1.646.653.6279.

COMMUNITY ITEMS OF INTEREST TO ICS MEMBERS

Love and Intimacy for the Disabled (LAID)

A media group founded by ICS member Stephanie Wallace that creates videos, podcasts, and live events to shed light on topics of living with disability that are not usually covered by other media. For more information, go to www.facebook.com/LOVEANDINTIMACYFORTHEDISABLED.

Disabled in Action

DIA is a civil rights organization committed to ending discrimination against people with disabilities—all disabilities. They fight to eliminate the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from enjoying full equality in American society. Founded in 1970, DIA is a democratic, not-for-profit, tax-exempt membership organization. DIA consists primarily of and is directed by people with disabilities. They believe in the motto, "Nothing about us without us!" For more information: www.disabledinaction.org.

General Membership Meetings are held monthly at **Selis Manor**, 1st Floor Auditorium, 135 West 23rd Street (between 6th and 7th Avenues) in Manhattan, **1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** See website for dates.

Able News

The newspaper for people with disabilities for more than 20 years. It is widely known in the disability community; a monthly newspaper that is published for, by and about the disabled, with the focus on the Able. Read Able online at ablenews.com. Subscription and registration is free.

The Axis Project

The Axis Project is a multi-disciplinary center committed to providing high-quality services for people with physical disabilities. Located in Harlem, the center is completely wheelchair accessible and includes all accessible equipment. Axis is a unique center that provides programs, activities, and classes specifically designed for people with disabilities to empower each individual to pursue a healthy, active lifestyle.

For information: email axisprojectnyc@gmail.com or call 646.450.0077.

If you have an item of interest to the ICS community that you'd like to share in The Independent's Community Corner, please send it to Sharifa Abu-Hamda at Independence Care System, 25 Elm Place, Fifth Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201, or send an email to theindependent@icsny.org.

Take full charge of your transportation! Ask your care manager about the Metro-Plus monthly MetroCard program.

In News

ICS Members Pack NY State Assembly Hearing on Home Care

When ICS members learned that the New York State Assembly would be holding hearings on the home care workforce on February 22 in downtown Manhattan, well over 40 were moved to make their presence felt and their feelings known about this issue of vital importance to their lives. The large number of people with disabilities attending pushed the Committees holding the hearing to open a spillover room “for the first time in memory,” according to one veteran Assembly member.

Convened at 250 Broadway, across the street from City Hall, the hearing was chaired

by Assembly member Richard Gottfried from the Committee on Health and attended by members of the Assembly’s Committees on Labor and Aging and the Taskforce on Disabilities, including Labor Committee chair Michele Titus, Aging Committee Chair Donna A. Lupardo, and local Assembly members, including Tremaine Wright of Brooklyn and Inez Dickens of Manhattan.

Two years ago, the Obama administration overturned the overtime exemption that kept home care workers from earning time and a half for hours worked above 40 hours, a move that federal courts affirmed (and the Supreme Court declined to gainsay) last year. Meanwhile, also in 2016, Gov.

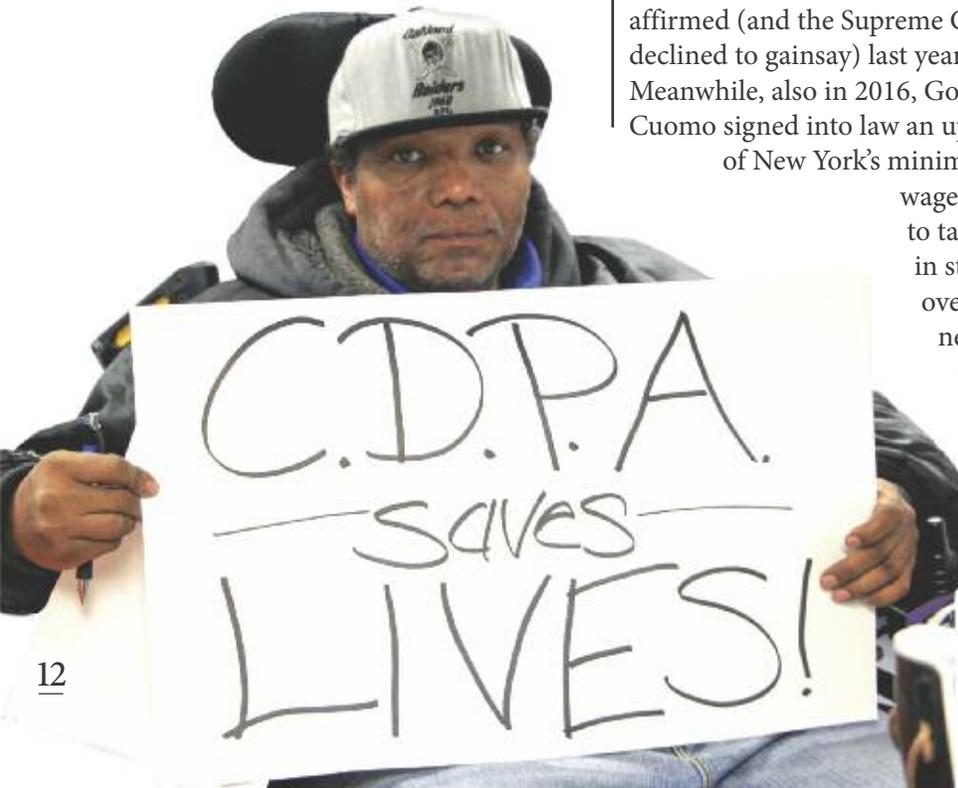
Cuomo signed into law an upgrade of New York’s minimum wage to \$15 to take effect in stages over the next several years.

Unfortunately, for many of New York’s home care workers, these mandated increases in their wages, without sufficient funds from the government to back them up, have meant cuts in hours rather than increases in pay. According to testimony, some have even had their wage rates cut by agencies or MLTCs that cannot afford the increases!

“If home care workers are not paid appropriately,” Marilyn Saviola, ICS Senior VP for Advocacy and the Health Access Project, testified, wearing her hat as a consumer, “they will leave the field and seek work in higher paying fields like the fast food industry. Most of the people I know that are home care workers are doing it because they love their work. They know they could work in another field but they choose to help people. We need home care workers to want to stay in this field.”

Marilyn pointed out the importance of her assistants to her own life, saying, “With home care, I have moved out of an institution, attended college, gotten a master’s degree, secured employment, led a nonprofit agency and started a program that has improved the lives of thousands of women in New York City. Without

Aurelio Manresa expresses his support for consumer-directed personal assistance.



home care, I am unable to work, unable to pay taxes and unable to contribute to society. It matters.”

Marilyn was one of eight ICS staff, members and caregivers whose testimony made a big impression

at the hearing. To learn more about this important issue, see www.icsny.org/members-testify-ny-state-assembly-hearing.

At ReelAbilities, Disability Rights Advocates Urge Involvement

People with disabilities have an enormous amount at stake

in federal, state and local politics and on Sunday, March 5, ICS and the ReelAbilities Film Festival brought together four generations of disability rights advocates to talk about their experiences and the future of the disability rights movement. The overarching message? It’s up to people with disabilities to make themselves seen and heard.

Victor Calise, Commissioner of the NYC Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, set the stage, saying, “When I think about advocacy it worries me. We don’t have enough young people rising up.... Without

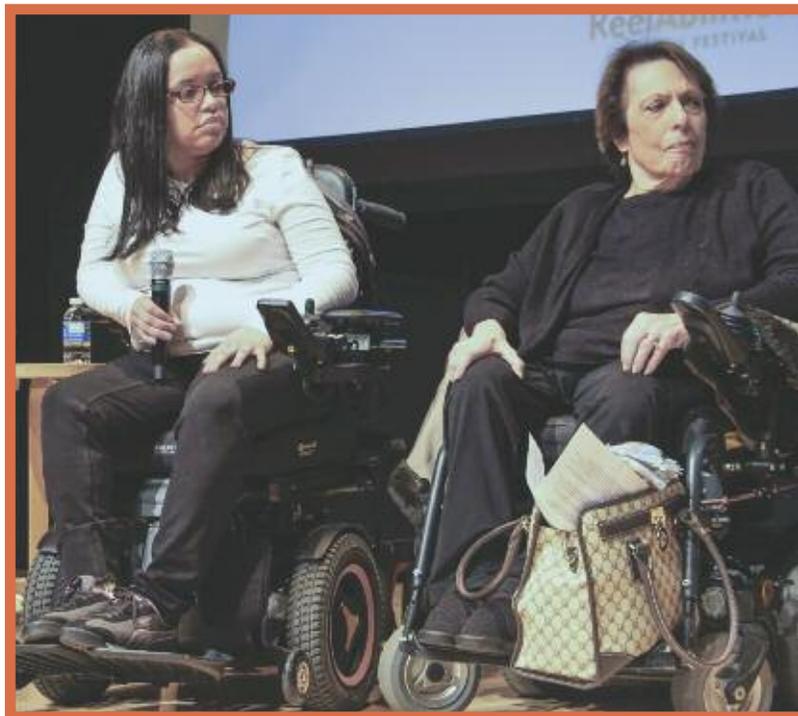
advocacy, we don’t exist.”

Panelists included ICS staffers Anna Fay

(see her profile on page 3) and Christy Cruz, plus Alex Elegudin of Wheeling Forward, actor-advocate Danny Woodburn and activist Xian Horn. Moderator

Lawrence Carter-Long asked the panel what got them started in advocacy. For Christy, the answer was easy. She became an advocate when she was denied access to a high school diploma because of her disability.

She spent five years battling the New York City Department of Education, successfully forcing them to follow longstanding laws on accessibility so that she could graduate high school and move on to college. Christy, who founded the ICS Women’s Empowerment Initiative, said, “This generation is not doing enough. Let’s make our



ICS’s own Christy Cruz (left) and Anna Fay shared their thoughts on advocacy at a panel at ReelAbilities Film Festival in March.

voices heard because nothing is going to be done if we don’t speak up for ourselves.”

Read more about this conversation at www.icsny.org/disability-advocates-reelabilities-film-festival, or watch the entire conversation here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMZ8_1BIIYI.

DISABILITY PRIDE NYC

Show Your Disability Pride, New York!

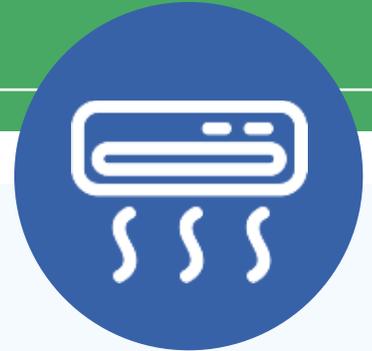
March in the 3rd Annual Disability Pride NY Parade, Sunday, July 9.

Meet at 10 a.m. at Union Square Park. Step-off is at 11:00 a.m.

Parade route is down Broadway to Washington Square Park, where a Disability Fair and Arts Festival will run from noon to 3:00.

For updated information, visit disabilitypridenyc.org.

If you're interested in marching, contact latricia.james@icsny.org after June 1 for more details.



HEAP: Free Air-Conditioners for Low-Income Households

If you have a medical condition made worse by heat, here is a great resource—but you have to act fast!

Beginning May 1, NYS Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is accepting applications for its 2017 Cooling Assistance Program, which provides one free air-conditioner for each qualifying household.

HEAP-funded air-conditioners are available to low-income people in NYS who have ongoing medical conditions made worse by heat. A doctor's letter

attesting to the condition is required. You must have no working air-conditioner in your home, and you cannot have received a HEAP air-conditioner within the last 10 years.

Supplies are limited and are distributed first come, first served—so the sooner you act, the better!

For more information, talk to your care manager, or visit otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/#cooling-assistance



Once upon a time...

*in a land not far away,
ICS was hosting an Art Show
and all were invited!*

Join us at the 2017 ICS Art Show
A Fairytale Affair

Friday, July 21
ICS Brooklyn Office
25 Elm Place, 5th Floor
SAVE THE DATE!
Visit www.icsny.org
for more information.

ICS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

For a full calendar of ICS social programs and special events, visit www.icsny.org.

Mondays

Learn to Draw & Paint with Rich,
ICS Brooklyn, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Basic Jewelry, ICS Brooklyn,
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Knitting & Crochet Group,
ICS Brooklyn, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tuesdays

TBA, ICS Brooklyn, various times
Creative Writing Circle,
ICS Manhattan, 5:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Wednesdays

Art for Everyone,
ICS Bronx, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Craft O' Mania,
ICS Brooklyn, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Thursdays

Music for Everyone,
ICS Brooklyn, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Movies at ICS,
ICS Brooklyn, 5:00 to 8:30 p.m.

June

- 6, 16** ICS University:
Introduction to Assistive Tech.
ICS Brooklyn (June 6) and ICS
Bronx (June 16), 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.
- 9** Member Civics League,
ICS Brooklyn, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
- 10** ICS/Axis Project Picnic.
For details, contact
sabuhamda@icsny.org.
- 22** Member Council/PAC Meeting,
ICS Bronx, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.

July

- 7** Member Civics League,
ICS Brooklyn, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Holiday Closings

All ICS offices closed

No social programs:

May 29, Memorial Day (offices close
3:00 p.m., Friday, May 26.)

July 4, Independence Day. (Offices
close 3:00 p.m., Monday, July 3)

ICS Brooklyn

25 Elm Place, 5th Floor

ICS Manhattan

257 Park Avenue South, 2nd Floor

ICS Bronx

400 East Fordham Road, 10th Floor

**Transportation not provided. Please
speak to your care manager about
reimbursement for use of mass
transit, including Access-a-Ride.**

