



Spring has sprung – and here at the Arc we are happy to be feeling warmer weather. After a difficult winter we are emerging into an environment where we can open our programs more fully.

Good news for many is that 92% of the people who live in our residences have been fully vaccinated. This was a choice for individuals and families. Also, some individuals are awaiting medical approval. We are working to help others we support access a vaccination if they so choose.

We have also been able to link many staff to vaccination clinics throughout the area. To date, approximately one-third of our staff have also been fully vaccinated. We continue to offer education and linkage to opportunities as they become available.

We have also been given permission by OPWDD to open visitation at our residences in a slow, methodical way. Each of our homes is aware of how best to meet that guidance and still ensure that family visits are fulfilling. We recognize how important strong family relationships are to the well-being of all concerned.

Our Day Services are opening up more fully as well. While we are still under the regulations for space requirements, we have been able to bring more people into our services daily. Transportation capacity remains a challenge as NYSDOH and OPWDD have not changed our limitation for only allowing 50% capacity in our vehicles.

Our greatest challenge remains recruiting enough well-qualified staff to meet all of our agency needs. Due to a number of circumstances, we are receiving fewer applications than prior years. Some of this is due to the pandemic, new unemployment programs, and very stiff salary competition from various sectors to include fast food restaurants and big box retailers.

At this time of year, it is vital to let your elected officials know that a significant investment is needed for our direct care staff in order to recruit and retain qualified staff.

Soon the budget will be finalized and we've been advocating to remember our field and ensure we are fully funded.

We are looking forward to better weather and more time outdoors. Have a great spring!

*Donna Saskowski
Executive Director*