

*Celebrating 25 years of speaking up
for ourselves and others!*



*Self-Advocacy Association
of New York State, Inc.*

**The Self-Advocacy Association of New York State
(SANYS)**

2011 Budget and Policy Platform

For more information about SANYS go to www.sanys.org

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Introduction

We understand that our country and our state are in the middle of very challenging economic situation that will last for some time and could get worse before it gets better. We understand what it takes to face challenges; that is what we do every day as individuals with disabilities and that is what we do as an organization. We believe we are most successful when we focus on how we can work together as self-advocates and as partners with other groups. We believe our lives are better when we think about more than our own interests and needs when we develop advocacy positions and strategies. We live in our communities, we live in New York, we live in the USA, and we have an obligation to step-up and contribute to the solutions to the challenges we all face.

We believe this is what every citizen of our country and of New York needs to do. We need to step up our 'we' thinking and look at how we can contribute to and help create the way through these challenges. We have written a brief paper that we feel begins to address these issues. We call our idea, ***From Me to We***.

What we mean by this theme, and what we hope, is that everyone will come to the tables of discussion about budgets, system change and sustainability with a willingness to put their own personal interests and priorities aside and focus on ideas, proposals and thoughts that may be the best for all people with developmental disabilities in the long run. We are hopeful that a real sense of fairness and a real People First point of view will be in everyone's minds.

Last year, SANYS developed a budget statement that would help guide our organization's NY State budget advocacy over the coming year, especially regarding the impact on OPWDD. We created a list of critical areas that we would use to objectively review the Governor's and OPWDD's budget proposal as well as responses and alternate proposals by the State Legislature and other groups. The following details SANYS' response to the Governor's budget based on these critical areas. We believe this budget crisis must be faced by all of us with a sense of selflessness and a commitment to OPWDDs most important theme—**Putting People First.**

SANYS 2011 Basic Principles Regarding the Governor's Proposed Budget for OPWDD

- Fairness and equity in all decisions
- Individual supports are what many people want and can be less expensive than traditional services
- Direct support professional staff –we need dedicated and fairly compensated people to support us
- Providers of service need to be financially stable
- We must continue to provide supports to people on waiting lists
- Self-advocates have a lot to offer including volunteer community service

SANYS 2011 Platform—Key Points

- Spend all money available to OPWDD, and dedicate all resources, in a people first way!!!!
- Keep all the money currently in OPWDD's budget, including Medicaid funds. SANYS supports an 1115 Waiver that we believe will help OPWDD transform its services, supports and choices over time. For now, it is important that OPWDD's budget not be significantly reduced. There are still many people waiting for services.
- Encourage and support provider agencies to reinvest the funds they receive so that more people can be supported with existing funds; individualized supports are an important way to do this.
- OPWDD must phase out of funding state operated services or provide these services at a lower cost.
- Through **provider reinvestment** and **less State operated costs**, OPWDD can provide service for some of the people on **waiting lists** for supports.
- Include people with disabilities and their families in all discussions about the future of services: **Nothing about us without us** is an important theme for self-advocates.
- Related to home health care for people with physical disabilities: Expand consumer directed options and do all we can as a state to support people in their communities instead of nursing homes.

Approved by the board of the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State, Inc., March 7, 2011