

April 20, 2023

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

CIAD is committed to empowering residents to improve the quality of their life and care and to support and maintain their self-determination and choice. New York State's Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living (EQUAL) Program has become an essential component to achieving these goals over many years. CIAD has played a critical role in the program's development since its inception, so that it now benefits residents' needs and priorities more directly and gives residents a central role in the EQUAL grant's application process.

CIAD continues to play a critical role in ensuring the EQUAL Program is implemented and funds are used as the New York State Department of Health intends. To this end, CIAD:

1. Provides education and support to resident council leaders and resident councils during the annual grant cycle, including:
 - a) informing residents of the new grant cycle and its deadlines once it is announced to facility operators,
 - b) educating councils on the steps the council should take to identify residents' priorities for funding,
 - c) advising councils during negotiations with facility management,
 - d) supporting councils in addressing applications that do not reflect their priorities.
2. Works with and supports the staff and volunteers of the New York State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program and its ten regional programs across the state.
3. Makes recommendations to improve the program to the New York State Department of Health. Recent improvements to the program because of our recommendations include:
 - a) expanding the timeframe of the application process to accommodate council deliberations,
 - b) requiring that resident councils be informed of the amount of the award the facility will receive to enable residents to make informed decisions regarding their priorities, and
 - c) posting the awards adult homes receive on the New York State Department of Health's website.

The following report, “EQUAL Program Evaluation: Determining Best Practices for NY ACFs”, concludes with ten (10) recommendations that we hope will be considered for implementation across future grant cycles. Our dedicated staff offers an additional recommendation regarding the timing of gift card distribution. We feel strongly that the gift cards which provide essential funds that residents use for clothing and food should be distributed within 45 days of the ACF operators receiving the funds from the state.

We thank the New York State Department of Health for the improvements it has already made to the EQUAL Program in response to CIAD’s concerns and recommendations. CIAD’s commission of this report continues CIAD’s commitment to ensuring the EQUAL Program works as it should to “enhance both residents’ quality of care and life experience.”¹

We would very much like to discuss the report and it’s recommendations with you as you prepare for the 2023-24 EQUAL Program year. We look forward to arranging a meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Geoff Lieberman

Executive Director

¹ New York State Department of Health. Adult Care Facility/Assisted Living. DAL#: 18-11: Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living (EQUAL) Program for SFY 2018-19. May 1, 2018.

https://www.health.ny.gov/facilities/adult_care/dear_administrator_letters/2018-05-01_dal_18-11_equal_program_sfy_2018-2019.htm.