



Memorandum in Support S.1035-A (Addabbo) and A.4685-A (Pheffer-Amato)

An act to amend the public health law, in relation to prohibiting general hospitals from disallowing individuals with disabilities from having an essential support person accompany them for the duration of their hospitalization

The New York Alliance for Inclusion & Innovation (NY Alliance) supports legislation prohibiting general hospitals from disallowing people with disabilities from having an essential support person accompany them for the duration of a hospitalization. S.1035-A and S.4685-A are critical pieces of legislation that clearly demonstrate the need for and importance of people having caregivers present during a hospital stay.

The NY Alliance is a statewide association representing nearly 175 not-for-profit provider agencies serving people with disabilities. The NY Alliance envisions a society where people with disabilities are contributing citizens with equal rights and the ability to live full, productive and meaningful lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the issue of visitation versus essential support in hospitals to the forefront. At the onset of the pandemic, visitors were not allowed inside hospital buildings for appropriate reasons. It took some time for hospitals to understand the need for certain patients to have essential support during hospital stays. As NY Alliance understands, the bill prohibits hospitals from *restricting* an essential support person from accompanying a person during a hospitalization and *does not in any way require* an essential support person for such a duty.

Oftentimes, people with disabilities have difficulty communicating their physical symptoms, healthcare needs or overall desires and wishes. They may also lack the ability to make decisions that impact appropriate levels of care and treatment. When people with disabilities are sick and require hospitalization, general anxiety and fear might be apparent. It's therefore critical that an essential support person join the individual in the hospital to provide support, serve as a communicator and assist with decision making. For a person with an intellectual and developmental disability, the essential support person might be a direct support professional.

It's important for the NY Alliance to point out that studies have demonstrated that constant and consistent support, given by someone such as an essential support person, helps prevent a





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patient's complications and aids in the person's improved condition. Essential support also helps the hospitalized individual achieve better outcomes and improved functioning, overall.

Therefore, the NY Alliance wholeheartedly supports S.1035-A and A.4685-A and urges passage in the State Assembly and State Senate.

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