



*Serving Children and Adults with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities for 70 Years*

May 8, 2020

**PAUL TORRES**  
Executive Director

Dear AHRC Suffolk Individuals, Families and Staff,

We are now two months into our COVID-19 response. While we have suffered heartbreaking losses and have struggled through many challenges, our staff's extraordinary devotion, caring and tireless efforts to support people with disabilities, their families, and each other, has been unprecedented.

**OFFICERS**  
John Smith  
President

Joseph Zifchock  
Treasurer

Joseph Cassarini  
Secretary

**DIRECTORS**

Deborah Pflieger

As we continue to navigate the weeks ahead, let's pause and celebrate the enormous power of team diversity. We are all different in so many ways, but these differences are grounded in the recognition that we share a common purpose. In our work with people with disabilities, this is one of the most essential and optimistic ways of embracing our common humanity. Disability can mean "different", but we all know it does not mean less human. Our nation's founding premise was that of equal rights and it must always be our North Star. Doing our best to keep the people we support safe from the coronavirus is not just a programmatic or clinical effort, it is grounded in the basic human rights of the people we support.

We urge you to sign this Change.org Petition!

**Petition for Funding from the Federal Government to the State of NY**

This petition is asking for additional and meaningful funding from the federal government. The Intellectual/ Developmental Disability (I/DD) system is supported primarily by Medicaid funding, which provides the essential services that New Yorkers with I/DD rely upon. Ours is the hardest hit state in the nation during this pandemic, which has resulted in an unprecedented revenue shortfall. As a result, these critical supports and services to people with I/DD are in jeopardy. Our great state has always been committed to providing essential services for all New Yorkers. We stand with Governor Andrew Cuomo in calling for vital federal aid and ask you to do the same to help New York uphold its responsibility to our loved ones.

So, while we cannot predict when the coronavirus crisis will truly settle down and end, we can find some comfort knowing that we are truly all in this together and, because of that, our bonds will be even further strengthened as we learn together, plan together and rebuild together.

If the response to the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that together we are truly better and can overcome unimaginable obstacles if we stay the course. This weekend I would especially like to acknowledge how many powerful, unwavering and courageous Mothers make up the AHRC Suffolk family. Aptly said, "you make me fearless!"

Stay safe,

Paul H. Torres  
Executive Director



*Serving Children and Adults with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities for 70 Years*

---

### As of today at AHRC Suffolk:

**PAUL TORRES**  
Executive Director

**OFFICERS**  
John Smith  
President

Joseph Zifchock  
Treasurer

Joseph Cassarini  
Secretary

**DIRECTORS**

Deborah Pflieger

- AHRC Suffolk's Seiff Educare Center is physically closed in keeping with the Governor's directive that schools not reopen this school year. That being said, our teachers and school administrators are working remotely with families, providing the children we serve with individualized learning packets and virtual opportunities that are educational, therapeutic, and fun. Please visit our [Seiff Educare YouTube channel](#) to see your favorite teacher, clinician or administrator.
- Our Adult Day Habs throughout the county are physically closed. Individuals are not receiving supports on site, but staff continue to reach out and check in with all families to offer all types of assistance and supports. Day Hab is currently offering services within the homes and reaching out to families and individuals who live in the community. For those individuals in the community, we have provided clinical support, community habilitation and are in the developing stages of a family support group via Zoom. We are also currently developing resources and supports that can be offered through telehealth.
- AHRC Suffolk's residences are all open and our staunch and dedicated DSP Heroes are doing yeoman's work. We are building our capacity for telehealth services so where applicable and when necessary are providing supporting services electronically. In addition, Day Services are being provided to residents by staff from Adult Day Services. We thank those staff for working in concert with their colleagues in the residences.
- While we've suffered devastating loses in our residences, the majority are free of the Coronavirus and Corona-like illness. Everyone who has been following our virus management procedures has contributed to limiting the spread of the virus.
- People employed through our Supported Employment (SEMP), have fared the same way as people in the general population. Some people are still employed and receiving support from AHRC Suffolk job coaches, while some have temporarily not been working as have many other New Yorkers.
- AHRC Suffolk leadership is working on a very preliminary and cautious plan for the gradual reopening of services. Eventual restarts will be subject to guidance from the NYS Departments of Health and OPWDD (Office for People with Developmental Disabilities).

### For Families:

- Realizing that the needs of families extend beyond service delivery and continues to grow, we have continuously updated our Resource Listing. The Listing contains resources that can offer all types of assistance from mental health counseling to unemployment and rent benefits. The Listing can be found [HERE](#).

**We will continue to keep everyone informed and request that all families send their email address to [info@suffahrc.org](mailto:info@suffahrc.org) (Subject: Contact Information). Please include the name of your family member, your name and cell/home phone number in order to facilitate communication.**

**Donate to AHRC Suffolk's COVID-19 Relief Fund at <https://www.ahrcsuffolk.org/covidrelief>**