



Finger Lakes **Independence** Center

*Opening Doors to Independence*

### **Our Mission**

**To empower all people with disabilities while creating an inclusive society through the elimination of social and architectural barriers.**

## **What's New at FLIC**

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### **Service Update**

FLIC is open for business Monday - Friday from 9:00 - 5:00. However, as many services as possible are still taking place remotely.

To maintain good health for our staff and visitors, all staff are working some days in the office and some days remotely. You can always reach someone at our building at 607-272-2433. You can email staff members as well.

To receive FLIC services, MASKS ARE REQUIRED IN THE FLIC BUILDING at all times. Please do not come to FLIC if you have symptoms of illness. Social distancing is also required.

If you are returning equipment you can place it in the small wooden shed to the left of the front door, then come inside to confirm your return and get your deposit back. Please consider donating your deposit because as a nonprofit, we appreciate extra support during this time.

Thank you for your patience during this difficult time.

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### **FLIC Implementing Electronic Visit Verification System for CDPA Aides**

Message from Jan Lynch, Executive Director at FLIC:

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) is mandatory for all states under Section 12006(a) of the 21st Century Cures Act. As a result, it is important for every provider or Fiscal Intermediary that offers in-home visits for Medicaid home health services and personal care services to use EVV technology. Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) is implementing the EVV system for consumers and aides of Consumer Directed Personal Assistance (CDPA) need to use.

EVV is a computer-based system designed to verify that specific service visits have occurred by documenting the time the visit begins and ends. This system will replace the paper-based timesheets used previously.

When a Consumer Directed Personal Assistant (CDPA) visits the home of a consumer to provide a service which must be reported under this system, several different parts of the visit must be documented, including:

1. the beginning time of the service
2. the ending time of the service
3. the date of the service
4. the name of the individual, or consumer, receiving the service
5. the type of service being performed
6. the CDPA's name
7. the location where the service was provided

The system is typically set up to have you complete this necessary information with a phone. We understand that learning a new reporting system is difficult. We have experienced the difficulties ourselves in setting up the system. It's important to remember that this is a Federal Mandate, so it must be done if an organization wants to provide CDPA services.

Once we are all trained in the new system, things will be simpler. Paper-based timesheets will no longer need to be submitted.

We will be in touch soon with more information. Anyone with questions should contact FLIC at 607-272-2433, and ask for Cheryl.

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### **Save the Date! Emergency Readiness 101 Virtual Training**

FLIC will present an online basic guide to emergency readiness on Wednesday, May 5, from 2:00- 3:00 pm.

This presentation will introduce the concept of being prepared for a variety of emergencies such as a power outage, needing to evacuate to a shelter, or shelter in place, such as a quarantine situation. Learn what documents should go with you to a shelter, what kinds of supplies you might want to have on hand for your specific needs and what social supports you can put in place now.

To register for this event, contact Jeff at [jeff@fliconline.org](mailto:jeff@fliconline.org) or call 607-272-2433.

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### **Let's Talk: People w/ Disabilities with Jan Lynch, Executive Director, Finger Lakes Independence Center**

Join the Community Foundation of Tompkins County and Jan Lynch, FLIC Executive Director, for a 30 minute conversation on the needs of and services for people living with disabilities in our community, especially given the stresses of last year and the ongoing recovery from COVID-19 pandemic. All of this along with ongoing work to build a more racially just society.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZ2VjEummGs>

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## COVID-19 Vaccine Update: Individuals who are Homebound Now Eligible and Added to Vaccine Registry

The Tompkins County Health Department has announced that individuals who are homebound can now use the [Tompkins County Vaccine Registry](#) and are eligible to receive the vaccine locally. Individuals are encouraged to sign up for the registry and will be communicated with by TCHD when appointments become available.

Individuals who are homebound will be vaccinated in their homes. TCHD will communicate directly with the individual who is homebound or a caregiver based on the information provided in the registry when appointments become available.

TCHD is also urging everyone who signs up for the registry to check their email (including their spam mailbox) and phone for messages confirming appointment availability. Emails containing appointment links come from [swift911@tompkins-co.org](mailto:swift911@tompkins-co.org). TCHD recently published a [video explaining the vaccine registry](#) on the County's YouTube page.

Caregivers, family members, or friends can complete this registry on behalf of someone who does not have access to the Internet. Individuals without computer and/or internet access may also call 2-1-1 (877-211-8667) during business hours 8:30am – 5:00pm and someone can register them over the phone. TCHD will use this registry to distribute registration links for eligible groups when vaccine appointments are available.

This registry does not guarantee a vaccine appointment. For local updates and information, check the TCHD [website](#).

If you need assistance to sign up for the Tompkins County Vaccine Registry, contact Teri at FLIC at 272-2433 or [Teri@fliconline.org](mailto:Teri@fliconline.org)

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### Tips For Job Seekers

If you are a first time job seeker or re-entering the job market, here are some helpful career assessment links. These career assessment tools are designed to help you figure out your skills, strengths, interests, & what types of careers you might be best suited for. Even though we usually start out with a basic idea of what type of career/job we're looking for, sometimes these assessment tools can give us insight into a new field that we haven't considered before. There are many skills that you may already have for one type of career/job, but you may not be aware that they would transfer well to a different type of career/job.

<https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/best-free-career-assessment-tools>

<https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Careers/interest-assessment.aspx>

If you're a person with disabilities and would like help figuring out how to understand the assessments, don't hesitate to call 272-2433 or email us - Emily Papperman [emily@fliconline.org](mailto:emily@fliconline.org) or Jorge Cuevas [Jorge@fliconline.org](mailto:Jorge@fliconline.org)

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## Join the FLIC Advocacy Team!

If you would like to become a part of FLIC's Advocacy team, please feel free to email Valerie at: [valerie@fliconline.org](mailto:valerie@fliconline.org). Being part of the team, you will receive relevant Action Alerts on issues you are passionate about, such as housing, education or health care to name a few. The Action Alerts will ask you to email, call or write a letter to your representative and we encourage you to express how you feel about the subject. It is extremely important for your representatives to know what the community and constituents feel about certain topics. You may volunteer to assist at certain events or participate in a few workshops. At this moment, COVID-19 is changing the traditional way of connecting in person and hosting events to using technology such a Zoom, social media, conference calls and emails.

### Snapshot of March Policy

#### Higher Pay for Home Health Care Workers!

NYAIL and many disability rights organizations, like The New York Caring Majority in New York, are working hard to push for a movement "Fair Pay for Home Care." COVID-19 exposed the weaknesses in the nursing home and home health care system. The movement asks for an increase up to 150 % of the minimum wage to reflect the work that deserves a salary higher than minimum wage. The higher pay will help increase the number of aides in home care. Between 2016 to 2026, New York needs to fill over 800,000 job openings for home health care and personal care aides. The minimum wage is currently \$12.50 in New York. If a home health care worker worked full time, around 35 hours a week, that would sum up to \$22,750. For more information, visit <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/callingforhomecare>

Currently, there is a huge demand for home care workers. As the number of older adults increases, so will the demand. The shortage would force senior citizens and people with disabilities to resort to institutional care.

Finally, a version of Fair Pay for Home Care has been introduced in the NYS Senate (S5374) and in the NYS Assembly (A6329). To access the bills, go to: <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/s5374>  
<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/A6329>

Contact your representatives to ask them to support and co-sponsor the bills:

Assemblymember Anna Kelles  
(607) 227-8030  
[kellesa@nysassembly.gov](mailto:kellesa@nysassembly.gov)

Senators:  
51st District: Peter Obercracker  
(607) 758-9005  
[oberacker@nysenate.gov](mailto:oberacker@nysenate.gov)

54th District: Pamela Helming  
315-568-9816  
[helming@nysenate.gov](mailto:helming@nysenate.gov)

58th District: Thomas O'Mara  
518-455-2091  
[omara@nysenate.gov](mailto:omara@nysenate.gov)

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### **Attention Tompkins County Residents**

***Do you or someone you know need a modular ramp to safely enter and exit your home?***

FLIC currently has modular ramping available.  
Call 272-2433 for an assessment.

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### **New Support Group for Parents of Children with Brain Injuries**

The Brain Injury Association of NYS has a new statewide support group for parents who are raising a child under age 18 with a brain injury.

Virtual meetings will be on the second Tuesday of every month (7:30 - 8:30 pm). Parents may join by computer or phone.

For more information, email Danielle Klein ([parentsg23@gmail.com](mailto:parentsg23@gmail.com)).

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### **Are You Interested in Being Part of a Support Group via Zoom?**

In these physically distanced times, it is easy to feel isolated and disconnected. FLIC is here to help and we want to hear from you!

Please email Megan at [Megan@fliconline.org](mailto:Megan@fliconline.org) if you would like to join a support group via zoom to talk about coping with covid, anxiety and depression, living with invisible disabilities, or other areas that impact your life. We want to know about the issues you are facing and how FLIC can best assist you going forward. Email Megan today!

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### **Want to Learn ASL?**

Due to Covid restrictions, we have not been offering American Sign Language classes. We are planning to resume the classes this fall. Be on the lookout for announcements regarding specific registration information for the next class. If you have questions, you can ask Amy Jo DeKoeyer at [amyjo@fliconline.org](mailto:amyjo@fliconline.org), or call 607-272-2433.

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### **Need Health Insurance?**

NYSDOH has extended Open Enrollment to December 31,2021.

Visit <https://hsctc.org/health-insurance-assistance/> or call 2-1-1 (1-877-211-8667) to make an appointment with one of our navigators, who provide free, unbiased assistance. You can also explore your options directly at [nystateofhealth.ny.gov](http://nystateofhealth.ny.gov).

Coverage start dates will vary:

Enroll by April 15: Coverage starts May 1

Enroll by May 15: Coverage starts June 1

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**Emergency Preparedness Tip of the Month - March**  
**The Core Advisory Group of Tompkins County reminds you:**

“Emergencies Don’t Wait. Make Your Plan Today.”

**Sheltering**

**Task One: Identify the best storm shelter in your home and practice getting to the shelter with your family.**

Choosing the best place in your home or workplace to shelter from a tornado isn’t always easy. Many newer buildings don’t have a really good shelter area. Use these rules of thumb to find the best tornado shelter possible:

- Stay away from windows and skylights
- Shelter “down and in” - Put as many walls between yourself and the outside as you can (think of the ceiling as a wall)
- Avoid rooms with large ceiling expanses
- Find an area large enough for everyone to stay comfortably for at least 45 minutes

If you live in an area prone to hurricanes, be prepared to protect your family and your property. Cover windows with plywood or hurricane shutters when a hurricane warning is issued—don’t use tape. If you are advised to evacuate, do so. Otherwise, stay inside and away from windows until the storm has completely passed.

**Task Two: Learn how to safely shelter in place.**

In an emergency like a chemical spill, you may be told to “shelter in place”. This means to make the place where you are a safe place to stay until the danger has passed. Shelter in place orders are given when it would be dangerous for you to go outside.

Notification - Warning sirens may be used to warn people that it is not safe to be outside. Emergency responders may go door to door in the affected area. They may also use loudspeakers from police or fire vehicles to give instructions. Information will also be given over television and radio using the Emergency Alert System.

What to do in a hazardous materials incident - The first thing to do when a chemical spill or similar event occurs is to get information. Turn on the television or radio to find out if your area is affected and what steps to take.

Never call 911 to get information about an emergency. Only call 911 if you are injured or need assistance.

If you are told to shelter in place you should close all doors and windows and shut off fans and air conditioners. Take your family to a room with as few doors and windows as possible. You may be told to put towels or tape around the cracks of the windows and doors. Follow emergency instructions carefully. Make sure you take a battery-powered radio with you so that you will know when the danger has passed. Power in your area may be shut off during the incident.

**Task Three: Make a Go Bag for emergency sheltering.**

Emergency shelters will be opened when people are displaced from their homes. In most areas emergency shelters are operated by the American Red Cross.

The Red Cross will provide:

- A cot to sleep on
- Meals and bottled water
- A nurse for basic medical care
- Information about the disaster from public officials

You may need to bring

- Pillow and blanket
- Your own medication and medical supplies (or a list of what you are taking, dosage, and doctor's name)
- Identification
- Change of clothes
- Cards or magazines
- Comfort items

Not allowed at the shelter

- Weapons or alcohol
- Pets (except for service animals)

Source: [www.do1thing.com](http://www.do1thing.com)

**The Core Advisory Group (CAG) of Tompkins County advocates for the inclusion of people with disabilities in all emergency preparedness activities. We welcome any interested people from the Tompkins County Community. For more information contact Jan Lynch 607-2722433; [jan@fliconline.org](mailto:jan@fliconline.org)**

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### **Frequently Asked Questions about the COVID-19 Vaccine**

**Why should I get vaccinated for COVID-19?** COVID-19 can cause serious illness or even death. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you. All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19 disease. Even if you still get infected after you get vaccinated, the vaccine may prevent serious illness.

**Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?** No, the vaccine does not cause COVID-19. None of the approved COVID-19 vaccines contain the virus that causes COVID-19. It does take a few weeks after vaccination for your body to build up antibodies to protect you from the virus. That means it's possible you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after getting the vaccine and still get sick.

**Will the shot hurt or make me sick?** Some people might get sore muscles, feel tired, or have mild fever after getting the vaccine. These reactions mean the vaccine is working to help teach your body how to fight COVID-19 if you are exposed. For most people, these side effects will last no longer than a few days. If you have any concerns, call your doctor or nurse.

**Why do I need two COVID-19 shots?** Some COVID-19 vaccines need two shots. The first shot gets your body ready. If you are told you need two shots, make sure that you get your second shot at the time you are told, to make sure you have full protection.

**Should I get vaccinated if I already had COVID-19?** Yes, you should still be vaccinated because you can become infected more than once. Although you may have some short-term natural protection (known as immunity) after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection will last. Vaccination is the best protection, and it is safe. People who get COVID-19 can have serious illnesses, and some have terrible symptoms that continue for months. If you have had COVID-19, ask your doctor, nurse, or clinic when you should be vaccinated.

**When will I be able to get the vaccine?** Although CDC makes recommendations for who should be offered COVID-19 vaccine first, each state has its own plan for deciding who will be vaccinated first and how they can receive vaccines. Please contact your local health department (<https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/index.html>) for more information on COVID-19 vaccination in your area.

**Do I have to pay for the vaccine?** No. The federal government is providing the vaccine free of charge to all people living in the United States.

**Do I still need to wear a mask and socially distance after getting the vaccine?** Yes. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to us to help stop this pandemic, like wearing a mask over your nose and mouth, washing your hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from people who don't live with you. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following CDC's recommendations for how to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19. [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines)

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### **NYS Department of Health Announces Fiscal Intermediary Changes Related to Consumer Directed Personal Assistance (CDPA) Services**

*This information appeared in the February newsletter. There are no new updates to report at this time. We will continue to send announcements to keep everyone informed.*

FLIC has been operating as a Fiscal Intermediary (FI) for consumer directed personal assistance programs since 1997. A little over a year ago the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) decided to put out applications for becoming an FI under NYSDOH. Their intent was to reduce the number of FIs in our state, and to provide consistency in operations. While these are good goals on the surface, this is often how services become less specific to the community where they operate. Last week, the NYSDOH put the list of approved FIs on its website. Out of 390 applicants, only 69 were awarded contracts.

After weighing and discussing the implications of the application, FLIC did not apply to be an FI because we knew the state was looking for large agencies, so as to reduce the number of FIs. Instead FLIC signed on to be a Collaborating Partner with larger Independent Living Centers (ILCs) who applied through the FI application. Two of those larger ILCs were awarded an FI contract. Both have already been in touch with us to start sorting out the details.



The simplest way to put this is that FLIC will continue to be a part of local CDPA services, but we will operate under contract with one or more larger FIs. This will not take place immediately as the state FI contracts are expected to take months to be drawn up and processed.

FLIC has always been committed to the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program, because it offers choices to help people with disabilities, whether present at birth, or acquired through injury, disease, or aging, to live in their homes and communities while selecting their personal caretakers. We continue to be committed to the program and we will keep you informed as we work in the background to figure out the details of how to comply with the changes to come, while maintaining the integrity of the service.

I will be getting a letter out to consumers and aides to explain this change, which should not impact them at this time. It is strongly suggested that consumers NOT switch FIs at this time because it could use up their one allotted chance to switch, which was part of what NYSDOH agreed to. FLIC will not be closing cases at this time.

At present, we will continue to operate as we have been, and consumers and aides of the program should do the same. We will let you know of any changes as we move forward. If you have questions, please feel free to email me at [jan@fliconline.org](mailto:jan@fliconline.org) or call 607-272-2433.

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### **Support FLIC When You Shop at Amazon**

You can use your shopping on Amazon to give back to FLIC! Amazon's "Smile" Program donates 0.5% of your eligible purchases to FLIC. Just go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and enter your Amazon username and password. Choose Finger Lakes Independence Center as your charity. It's easy, please do it today!

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### **Need a Public Notary?**

Contact Cheryl Baker at FLIC at 272-2433 to make an appointment. Services are FREE.

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[Donate](#)

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**Finger Lakes Independence Center, 215 5th Street, Ithaca, NY 14850**  
**Phone: 607.272.2433**  
**Email: [info@fliconline.org](mailto:info@fliconline.org)**  
**Website: [www.fliconline.org](http://www.fliconline.org)**  
**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/fingerlakesindependence](http://www.facebook.com/fingerlakesindependence)**