

Enjoy the latest news from your friends at



Finger Lakes Independence Center
Opening doors to independence

March 2025

March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

"If disabled people were truly heard, an explosion of knowledge of the human body and psyche would take place."

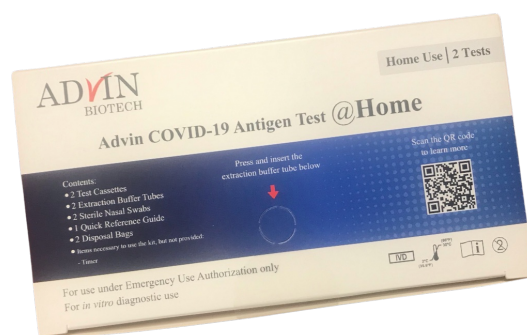
-- Susan Wendell, author

Short Notes:

- FLIC is looking for new board members. Please reach out to Executive Director Jan Lynch at jan@fliconline.org or 607-272-2433 if you are interested in being on the board. We would love to talk!
- Reminder: Starting with the February issue of this newsletter, ALT Text has been added to all images.
- Need a **Notary Public**? Our services are free. Contact Cheryl at cheryl@fliconline.org or 607-272-2433 to make an appointment.

Free Covid Tests

We now have at-home Covid tests available for the community! There are two tests per box, good through February 2026. Enjoy 5 boxes per household, unless you are picking up for another household as well, in which case you can take another five boxes. While supplies last.



Walker Bags Donated

Sew Givers generously made and donated 20 beautiful, colorful walker bags to FLIC. Community members can borrow them at no cost or FLIC will happily gift them if asked.

Medicare Fraud of the Month:

New Medicare Card Scams

The New York StateWide Senior Action Council (StateWide), an organization dedicated to advocacy for the rights of seniors in New York State, recently announced the Medicare Fraud of the Month: New Medicare Card Scams.

"Every new year, scammers target Medicare beneficiaries with fraudulent schemes involving their Medicare cards. It is important to remember that Medicare is not issuing new cards this year or any year," stated Maria Alvarez, Executive Director of StateWide.

Alvarez warned of potential new Medicare Card fraud schemes to watch out for:

- Be cautious of calls claiming to be from Medicare asking for the name of doctors, your medical condition, diagnoses, or medications. Scammers often use this tactic to make their schemes seem legitimate.
- Medicare cards do not expire. Scammers may say you need a new card for the new year — don't fall for it.
- Beware of offers for special Medicare cards made of plastic, metal, or with a "special chip." Medicare only issues standard paper cards, they do not need to be replaced or upgraded to access benefits.

How to protect against these scams

- Protect yourself: Verify unknown or suspicious callers. If you're unsure if a call is legitimate, hang up and call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE or the NY SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Fraud Helpline at 800-333-4374.
- Don't trust any phone number provided by the caller.
- Don't engage. If you receive any unexpected calls, texts, or emails asking for personal information, hang up immediately. Do not provide any personal details.
- Guard the Card: Treat Medicare and Social Security numbers like a credit card; keep them private and secure.
- If Medicare fraud is suspected, report it to the NYS Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) by calling its Helpline at 800-333-4374 or visit www.nysenior.org

StateWide also provides information and educational presentations, assistance regarding any Medicare questions, plan comparisons, appeals, billing issues and patients' rights to all seniors throughout New York State.

The StateWide Fraud of the Month is a component of the Senior Medicare Patrol, the definitive resource for New York State's senior citizens and caregivers to detect, prevent, and report healthcare fraud, errors, and abuse. StateWide is New York's grantee/administrator for this Federal Program.



March 1 is
Zero Discrimination Day a
day to promote inclusion,
compassion, and peace

CDPAP Transition: We're Here to Help You!

Finger Lakes Independent Living Center is a facilitator for the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP). As mentioned last month, we are Facilitators with the new statewide fiscal intermediary, Public Partnerships LLC (PPL), **to make sure you continue receiving care**. We know that change can be difficult so please remember that FLIC staff are here to help you with this transition process.

What is Next for You:

You will need to transition to PPL by March 28, 2025. You can work with FLIC to complete the process. FLIC will reach out to you to start the transition and make sure you are all set to continue with CDPAP. However, you do not have to wait to hear from us. You can call us at 607-272-2433 or email us at cdpahelp@FLICOnline.org. These are the steps to transition:

Consumers

- PPL does everything online, so if you want to complete your new registration by yourself, you can do so by starting at PPL@home.
- Connect with FLIC to have help with the transition. You will need to make an appointment with one of the staff at FLIC who are helping with the CDPAP transition. Your appointment can be for phone help, in person at our office, or we can come to your home if needed.
- If possible, have your PAs/Aides complete their required forms and training online.

Personal Assistants/Aides

- You can work with your consumer to get on the PPL site to complete your registration. Consumers need to have completed their paperwork for you to connect your paperwork as a PA or Aide to their account.

- Fill out, sign, and submit the required forms and documents online through the PPL@Home system. FLIC has a confidential file in our office with some of your information that is needed. We can help you by scanning documents that you need. Call us at 607-272-2433 for help.
- Complete a health assessment if yours has expired.
- Complete the required PPL trainings.

Staying Connected

Please reach out to FLIC at 607-272-2433 or cdpahelp@FLIConline.org for assistance with the transition process.

You can also find more information about PPL and CDPAP at PPL's website, pplfirst.com/cdpap.

FLIC Went to Albany to Discuss Budget Priorities on Advocacy Day

NYS is in the midst of the 2025-2026 budget! Governor Hochul released her initial budget earlier this year.

The New York Association on Independent Living had a Budget Advocacy Day on February 11 in Albany. This Advocacy Day gives advocates a chance to meet with representatives to discuss budget priorities and concerns. FLIC's Statewide Systems Advocate, Andrea Champlin, traveled to Albany to meet with NYS Senator Webb and Assemblymember Kelles along with representatives from the Southern Tier Independence Center.

Here is an overview of some of the budget priorities that were discussed:

Independent Living Funding

- Independent Living Center Funding: Last year, ILCs received a \$750,000 increase in base funding. Unfortunately, that increase was not reflected in this year's budget. Staff advocated for restoration of the previous increase and an additional \$8.25 million investment in ILCs, for a total of \$25 million.

- Cost of Living Adjustment: Since ILCs are funded through the NYS Department of Education, they are not eligible to receive the cost-of-living adjustment that human services programs are eligible for. Staff advocated to have ILCs included (A.2590/S.1580).

Health/Medicaid

- Consumer-Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP): Staff voiced many concerns about the ongoing transition to a single statewide fiscal intermediary and urged legislators to intervene to halt the process, or at the very least, slow it down to help ensure consumers do not lose services. Staff also advocated for ILC roles to be preserved and support the \$20 million appropriation for ILC FIs that serve as specialized Facilitators.
- Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD): The NHTD provides much-needed funding to assist people who would like to avoid nursing home placement or are currently in nursing homes and would like to transition back to the community. Governor Hochul proposed imposing a cap on this program, which would limit how many people can utilize it. Staff advocates against this cap and spoke about how the program can create long-term savings for NYS.
- Medicaid Redesign Team II Cuts: In 2020, many cuts to eligibility for CDPAP were approved. These eligibility changes would make it difficult or impossible for consumers who do not require hands-on, physical assistance to receive homecare. Many consumers rely on homecare and deserve to receive it, even if they do not need hands-on assistance. Staff advocated for revenue earned from Managed Care Organization tax to be used to offset the costs and maintain current eligibility.

Housing

- Access to Home: Last year, the budget included a funding increase for Access to Home, which provides important accessibility modifications to consumers' homes. This increase was not reflected in this years' budget. Staff advocated for restoration of the increase and additional funds to bring total funding up to \$6 million.

Employment

- Disability Employment Tax Credit: Staff voiced support for increasing the Disability Employment Tax Credit, helping business and organizations hire more people with disabilities

Transportation

- Paratransit: Advocates discussed the importance of funding a

\$25 million paratransit expansion pilot program for 5 upstate transit authorities.

You can read the full 2025 Disability Priority Agenda for the budget by viewing it [here](#).

Feedback Wanted

The National Institute of Health (NIH) is developing the NIH Strategic Plan for Disability Health Research and is seeking feedback on the draft framework for this plan. NIH wants to get feedback from a range of individuals with disabilities, healthcare professionals, researchers, advocates, and advocacy organizations.



Responses are due by March 12, 2025. Submit feedback to the NIH [here](#)!

Who is 2-1-1?

2-1-1 is an information and referral service that is open **24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year**. It is the simplest way for New Yorkers to get the assistance they need to connect to important services.

2-1-1 is designed to help, among others, the elderly, the disabled, those who do not speak English, those having a personal crisis, those with limited reading skills, and those who are new to their communities.



Try-It-Room **Spotlight**

Smart Pens

Smart pens allow its user to record everything they hear, say, and write, while adding audio recordings to notes. Recordings can be replayed on the pen or a mobile device by tapping on the handwritten notes. Come check out our smart pens and see if they're right for you.



Items in our Try-It-Room can be borrowed for one month with no deposit or cost. For more information , contact Lindsey at: lindsey@fliconline.org or 607-272-2433.

FLIC'S Safety and Preparedness Corner

Winter Preparedness for Next Year!

Put these tasks in your calendar now

- ☐ ✓ Have your heating sources inspected annually.
- ☐ ✓ Install and check your smoke alarms.
- ☐ ✓ Have your snow removal equipment serviced.
- ☐ ✓ Make sure you have an adequate supply of rock salt (to melt ice on walkways), sand (to generate traction, heating oil if you use it to heat your home, and winter supplies.
- ☐ ✓ Winterize your home, including protecting your pipes from freezing.
- ☐ ✓ Have safe, emergency heating equipment available.

Registry Referral Program

FLIC offers the Registry Referral Program, a free referral service linking caregivers to people who need in-home care. Opportunities include: companionship, housekeeping, running errands, cooking, being a personal care aide, home care aide, LPN, RN and more.

If you need assistance or if you would like to list your name as a caregiver, please contact Cheryl at 607-272-2433 or cheryl@fliconline.org. This program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.



We Would Love to Hear From You

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Video (607) 216-9683
Fax (607) 272-0902
info@fliconline.org

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Monday-Friday • 9:00am-5:00pm
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