

Enjoy the latest news from your friends at



Finger Lakes Independence Center
Opening doors to independence

august 2025



Check Out the Most Beautiful Mural!

(if we do say so ourselves)

Behold! In the month of July, artist Nico Cathcart completed her fine work on the front of the FLiC building. Thank you to the artist, Caleb Thomas and the crew at Ithaca Murals, the community volunteers who helped prepare the facade for painting, the anonymous donor who contributed the funding needed, and to the FLiC staff who were cheerleaders in the process. If you wish to see

the project from start to finish -- culminating in a beautiful aerial video -- check out our [Facebook](#) page.

**“Life is all about balance.
Since I have only one leg, I understand that well.”**

-- Sandy Fussell, author

Short Notes:

- FLIC will be closed on Monday, September 1, in observance of Labor Day.
- According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 1.3 billion people experience significant disability. This represents 16% of the world's population ... or 1 in 6 of us.
- Starting this fall, for the 2025-2026 school year, all students in the Ithaca City School District will receive free school meals, both breakfast and lunch, due to a new New York State law. This universal free meal program applies to all students, regardless of their family's income.
- You can contact FLIC by calling 607-272-2433 or by emailing the general mailbox at info@fliconline.org.

**** **A Fantastic Offer from FLIC**

Our Loan Closet is bursting at the seams! If you know someone who needs any of the equipment on the list below, we will gift the item to them. A small donation is encouraged but not required.

We have:

Two-wheel walkers

Standard walkers (no wheels)

Crutches

Commodes

Raised toilet seats without handles

Tub benches

Shower stools and shower chairs

Just a general year-round reminder: If you know of a community member who has a long-term need for items that we offer through our Loan Closet but not the financial means to purchase them elsewhere, we will gift the items if we have them available.

CDPAP **UPDATE**

There is still time for YOUR voice to be heard regarding CDPAP!

The NYS Senate Committee on Health and Committee on Investigations and Government Operations are calling a Public Hearing to investigate the transition of the Consumer-Directed Personal Assistance Program to a single statewide fiscal intermediary (Public Partnerships LLC). Though the hearing was initially scheduled for July 9, it was postponed by NYS. and the new date for the public hearing will be at 10am Thursday, August 21.

The hearing will include public comment and testimonies from those impacted by the transition. If you are interested in sharing your story and speaking about your experience, please contact Andrea by emailing her at Andrea@FLIOnline.org . You do NOT need to include your name or other identifying information if you do not wish to do so.

IMPORTANT!

Changes to NYS Medicaid-funded Home Care Eligibility

Despite advocacy efforts, a new state rule will take effect beginning **September 1, 2025**. The rule change will create stricter eligibility to qualify for home care services using Medicaid. Starting on 9/1/25, home care services will be restricted to those who require limited physical

assistance for at least 3 activities of daily living. You can read more about the changes by visiting the [NY Health Access](#) info page. If you think you may need to enroll in home care services, we highly recommend completing the New York Independent Assessment process before 9/1/25. The New York Independent Assessment office can be reached by calling 855-222-8350. FLIC also has additional information about the NYIA process; please email Andrea at Andrea@FLICOnline.org if you'd like to receive it.



EMERGENCY Preparedness



You Can Download Emergency Preparedness Workbook for People with Disabilities

The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities provides a emergency preparedness resource hub for people with disabilities:

<https://www.ohsu.edu/university-center-excellence-development-disability/emergency-preparedness-people-disabilities>

Information/resources include:

- Information about the types of disaster for which you may need to prepare.
- Videos, toolkits, and checklists to help you prepare for emergencies.
- Ready Now! The emergency preparedness toolkit for people with disabilities, second edition, updated in 2023.

The workbook itself covers:

- The 10 basic steps to preparedness
- The types of emergencies you might expect
- A personal ability assessment
- Emergency support groups
- Emergency contact lists
- Emergency papers
- Emergency tips for specific disabilities
- How to answer: Should I stay or should I go?

- Preparing service animals and other pets
- Summary checklists
- Resources



Audit Finds State Health Department Slow to Inspect Violations at Adult Care Facilities

July 9, 2025

The state Department of Health (DOH) is not adequately overseeing adult care facilities, risking the health and safety of vulnerable residents, according to an audit released today by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli. The audit found DOH at times failed to conduct timely inspections and often lacked documentation to show critical problems were corrected.

“Adult care facilities across the state have a responsibility to protect residents and deliver quality care,” DiNapoli said. “Regular and routine inspections of these facilities, and correcting problems, ensure residents are not left in unsafe or unsanitary conditions. If the state Department of Health isn’t conducting timely inspections or following up to make sure violations are corrected, then vulnerable residents could be left at risk.”

Adult care facilities are primarily home to people who can no longer live independently, but do not require the care of a nursing home. These facilities provide housing, meals and personal care for individuals who need help with daily activities. All facilities must be licensed, and DOH is required to supervise them through regular inspections and complaint investigations. As of 2023, there were 534 adult care facilities operating in New York, serving 37,547 residents.

The audit reviewed DOH’s oversight of these facilities from January 2018 to October 2024. Health and safety issues at facilities can include, but are not limited to, inadequate staffing, call bells not functioning, no clear emergency shelter plans or the presence of mold, mice or bed bugs.

Delayed Inspections

The audit found DOH failed to complete inspections within the required 12- to 18-month timeframe at 70% of the 30 sampled facilities, with some

delayed by as much as five years. Three of the state's four regional oversight offices had inspection backlogs – New York City, Long Island and Western New York – while Central New York had no backlog.

Auditors conducted site visits at 20 of the sampled adult care facilities across the state and found a range of serious health and safety issues, including:

- Crumbling stairs and walkways;
- Dishwashers that didn't reach safe temperatures;
- Refrigerators that weren't cold enough; and
- A lack of regular fire drills.

Auditors also found additional unresolved problems:

- Expired medication present four years after a prior citation;
- Staff still uncertified in basic first aid more than 13 months after being cited; and
- A half-empty vodka bottle in a medical room and marijuana paraphernalia in an administrator's office.

At one adult care facility that had not received a full inspection in nearly two years, auditors found issues that posed immediate risks to residents' health and safety. DOH officials were notified and immediately performed a full inspection of the facility, resulting in a total of 54 violations and 12 findings.

If you wish to read more, please read the entire article with a link to the article at

[https://www.osc.ny.gov/press/releases/2025/07/state-health-department-slow-inspect-violations-adult-care-facilities-audit-finds?
utm_content=20250712&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govDelivery](https://www.osc.ny.gov/press/releases/2025/07/state-health-department-slow-inspect-violations-adult-care-facilities-audit-finds?utm_content=20250712&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govDelivery)



Beware Extreme Heat!

People with disabilities, access and functional needs, and older adults may be at increased risk to extreme heat. For example:

- People with spinal cord injuries are at higher risk during extreme heat because they may not be able to cool their body

through sweating.

- People who take medications for mental health conditions, including schizophrenia, are at risk because their medications may interfere with the body's ability to cool itself.
- People with cognitive, intellectual or developmental disabilities, including Alzheimer's disease and dementia, are at risk because they may have trouble understanding and explaining how the heat affects them. This could prevent them from taking protective actions. It's important to know that a person's ability to perceive and communicate physical discomfort may vary with the stage of dementia or disease.

It is important to plan, take precautions, have support, and be aware of the symptoms of heat exposure. Keep these tips in mind during extreme heat:

If you have a support network -- caregivers, family and friends -- ask them to help monitor and address your heat-related needs; have them check in with you regularly to ensure you are safe and healthy.

Read the side effects of medications and talk with your doctor about how heat exposure will interact with them.

Take a cool shower, bath or sponge bath to cool the body if you are experiencing heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Ask your local energy utility for priority access in the event of power loss because power restoration is life-sustaining for someone in the home.

Monitor your local weather and emergency information alerts. Sign up for local weather alerts at <https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Emergency-Response/Emergency-Notifications-SIREN>. If you have trouble signing up for this alert, the FLIC staff can assist you.

Have a plan that includes shade, hydration, sun protection, and limiting exposure time if you're going to be outdoors.

Identify possible locations with air conditioning and ensure needed accommodations ahead of time. This could include someone in your support network with air conditioning.

Coordinate accessible transportation to/from cooling options.

People with medical needs who can't be accommodated at conventional cooling options may have to contact local hospitals or

nursing homes to create contingency plans if they can't stay at home.

For more information visit:

<https://www.ready.gov/disabilities>

Cooling centers located in Tompkins County:

- Appel Commons Community Center (Ithaca)
- Brooktondale Community Center
- Greater Ithaca Activities Center
- Groton Public Library
- Ithaca College
- Lansing Community Library
- Newfield Public Library
- Noyes Community Recreation Center (Ithaca)
- Olin and Uris Libraries (Ithaca)
- Robert Purcell Community Center (Ithaca)
- Shops at Ithaca Mall
- Slaterville Volunteer Fire Company
- Southworth Library (Dryden)
- Tompkins Cortland Community College
- Tompkins County Office for the Aging
- Tompkins County Public Library
- Ulysses Philomatchi Library
- YMCA of Ithaca & Tompkins County

The Disability Pride Flag: A Symbol of Community and Progress

The Disability Pride Flag is a unifying symbol created by artist Ann Magill, a disabled woman with cerebral palsy. Originally released in 2019 and updated in 2021 for greater visual accessibility, the flag reflects the diversity and strength of the disability community.

Its design features a charcoal grey background and five diagonal stripes that represent:



- Red: Physical disabilities
- Gold: Neurodivergence
- White: Invisible and undiagnosed disabilities
- Blue: Psychiatric disabilities
- Green: Sensory disabilities

The grey on the flag honors those lost to ableism, violence, and systemic neglect. The diagonal layout represents forward movement and the cutting of barriers.

At the Institute for Disability Awareness, we recognize this flag as a reminder of the ongoing work toward equity, visibility, and justice.

Try these for free!

Adaptive Silverware



Available in our

Try It Room

Items in our Try It Room can be borrowed for one month. There is no deposit or cost associated with using items from the Try It Room.

FLiC

Want to Make A Difference? August offers ...

National Make-a-Will Month

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

National Immunization Awareness Month

National Breastfeeding Month

World Breastfeeding Week

National Minority Donor Awareness Month

National Immunization Awareness Month

Psoriasis Action Month

Neurosurgery Awareness Month

Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Awareness Month

Lung Cancer Day, August 1

National Health Center Week , August 10 - 16

International Overdose Awareness Day | August 31

And many more ...

Increased Awareness is a Powerful Tool.



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**We Would
Love to Hear
From You**

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