



**New York State Association of
Area Agencies on Aging**

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Kathryn Kuhmerker, Deputy Commissioner
NYS Department of Health
Office for Medicaid Management
Corning Tower, Room 1466
Albany, NY 12237

Neil E. Lane, Acting Director
NYS Office for the Aging
Two Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12223-1251

Dear Ms. Kuhmerker and Mr. Lane,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your Request for Information for a long term care point of entry system. We applaud your efforts to implement a "system that is easy for consumers and their caregivers to understand and use; that respects consumer choice by providing consumers and their caregivers with unbiased comprehensive information about available long term care options and provider performance; and that involves consumers and their caregivers in the planning, evaluation and decision making, so that supports are guided at all levels by consumer needs and preferences."

New York has a strong county government system. Many services affecting persons with disabilities and the senior population in New York State are administered through county-level government and New York City government. Despite the comprehensiveness and capacity of the system, challenges remain in meeting needs in timely, cost-effective ways that promote dignity, independence, personal responsibility and choice. With due respect to the collaborative efforts of many organizations, the wide range of services available has produced an environment in which several providers, each drawing upon a different funding stream, may provide services to the same person without truly collaborating and working together to help maintain that person in the community.

That is not to say that the current system is not without the ability to provide the level of quality care as envisioned by the Governor's Interim Work Group on Long Term Care Reform. Appropriate entities already exist at the local level. County Offices for the Aging are well positioned with the appropriate experience and skills to assemble the necessary local partners to successfully implement NY ANSWERS. County Offices for the Aging, under the state agency oversight of the New York State Office for Aging are uniquely poised to take on a local leadership role in establishing the framework needed to change the design and delivery of long term care services in New York State.

Using the strengths of our existing programs, the community trust and respect earned over 30 years, incorporating and expanding existing technology, coordinating existing staffing functions, and recognizing the value and importance of partners in local health, Medicaid and other human service agencies, local Offices for the Aging visualize creating a long term care system that is seamless to the consumer and is cognizant and respectful of the important roles played by local partners, consumers and caregivers.

Thank you for giving consideration to our position.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Yandea
President

Laura A. Cameron
Executive Director