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April 2, 2021
Honorable Mayor DeBlasio
Office of the Mayor
City of New York, NY 10007

Re: Reopening New York State Adult Day Services

We are writing to you to request that Social Adult Day Care Programs be permitted to resume in-person services effective immediately. While the State has announced a phased reopening of Adult Day Health Care programs across the state beginning April 1, Social Adult Day Care remains closed to in-person services in New York City. Adult Day Care is critical service in the Long-Term Care continuum, keeping people out of nursing homes and avoiding costly hospital stays. The March 16, 2020 Executive Order 100 § 17 directs that *all older adult congregate centers operating within the City, whether publicly or privately owned or funded, shall be closed and all programs suspended for the duration of the state of emergency...*As you know, these programs serve vulnerable individuals often times with Alzheimer's/dementia, and it is critical that City allow them to offer in-person care as soon as possible, rescinding this section of the Executive Order.

Additionally, we would like to bring your attention to the critical differences between Social Adult Day Care enrollment, participation and requirements as compared to Senior Centers and why it is essential that these two entities are treated separately in the City's reopening efforts.

SOCIAL ADULT DAY CARE V. SENIOR CENTERS

The current healthcare requirements, in addition to having a low income, to be enrolled in a Medicaid Managed Long Term Care Plan are as follows:

- needing at least limited assistance with physical maneuvering with more than two activities of daily living;
- or for persons with a dementia or Alzheimer's diagnosis, as needing at least supervision with more than one activity of daily living.

Activities of daily living include such tasks as dressing, using the bathroom, moving about your environment, housekeeping, and meals. Assisting persons who are elderly or with disabilities so that they may remain out of nursing homes prevents the higher cost of institutional care.

The [current requirements](#) to be enrolled in a senior center are :

Senior center membership is free and open to anyone age 60 or older, and you can join any center you like Senior centers members can go to restaurants and enjoy social activities elsewhere, without restrictions. However, restricting services to those who have a low income and disability is surely increasing healthcare disparities unnecessarily.

It is critical that Social Adult Day Care be treated separate from Senior Centers in the reopening effort to ensure that this critically vulnerable population is adequately served and receiving the benefits they are entitled to.



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Furthermore, while we are grateful for our industries' inclusion to provide telehealth services and the proposed expansion of telehealth services in the State's FY 2022 Budget, this service simply cannot replace in-person care. We would like to move forward with a hybrid model, combining both in-person care for those who meet the criteria and telehealth services for those who would be better served remotely. Many of the individuals served by these programs require care and assistance that cannot be provided over the phone, and their lack of access to in-person care has unfortunately led to caregivers and program directors noticing significant mental and physical declines in those they serve.

The importance of social interaction should also not be forgotten when considering the needs of these individuals. Although precautions are certainly necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19, particularly for those that are especially susceptible to complications from the virus, that does not mean they should be isolated for months at a time. Due to the fear and anxiety of contracting coronavirus, isolation from the stay at home order, the loss of loved ones and/or friends, participants' needs are especially high. Receiving in-person care in a safe environment abiding by strict safety protocols would help to meet the physical, mental and social needs of enrollees, especially those that are lacking support outside such programs.

Continued closure of these programs is not sustainable for the hundreds of program operators or for the individuals they served, which is why the City needs to take proactive steps to empower them to safely reopen.

Social Adult Day Care programs are ready to safely reopen and can help vaccine education and access to the critical population they serve. Often there are cultural barriers that program operators and staff are able to break through due to their existing relationships with clients and families and sensitivity to cultural issues. We respectfully request that you make the reopening of these programs a top priority.

I appreciate your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to working with you on this urgent request.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie Selfridge
President