

July 27, 2026

Amir Bassiri

Medicaid Director

Valerie Deetz

Deputy Director, Office of Aging & Long-Term Care

Office of Health Insurance Programs

One Commerce Plaza

Albany, NY 12210

Re: Request for Immediate Resumption of NHTD Waiver Reform Stakeholder Engagement

Dear Mr. Bassiri and Ms. Deetz,

We, the undersigned organizations representing NHTD Waiver providers, participants, advocates, family members, and community stakeholders across New York State, respectfully request the immediate resumption of regular stakeholder discussions regarding the reform of the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) Medicaid Waiver Program.

The NHTD Waiver exists to ensure that older adults and individuals with physical disabilities who require nursing home level of care have meaningful opportunities to live safely and independently in their communities. The success of this program depends upon strong collaboration between the Department of Health, Regional Resource Development Centers (RRDCs), waiver service providers, participants, and other stakeholders.

NHTD waiver reform stakeholder meetings provided an important forum to:

- Develop reforms that address program growth and cost concerns, enabling the cap to be lifted and services expanded to thousands of New Yorkers who need them.
- Improve access to NHTD waiver services by developing a structured regional waitlist process.
- Identify operational challenges before they become systemic issues.
- Support consistent waiver administration statewide.
- Develop practical, collaborative solutions to strengthen program quality and compliance.

Unfortunately, these meaningful engagement opportunities have largely ended. At a time of significant operational change, including federal oversight, evolving program expectations, workforce shortages, and ongoing implementation challenges, the lack of regular stakeholder communication has created uncertainty across the waiver system.

Some of New York's most vulnerable residents are awaiting information about openings in the NHTD waiver program. Many are going without services needed to remain safely at home or transition back into the community instead of remaining in a nursing home.

Providers across the state continue to experience challenges that directly affect participant access to services, including inconsistent interpretation of policy, administrative delays, communication barriers, and operational concerns that would benefit from collaborative discussion. Participants and families likewise deserve transparency regarding program developments that impact their ability to remain safely in their homes and communities.

As partners in the delivery of Home and Community-Based Services, we believe that open communication strengthens, not complicates, the Department's ability to administer a successful waiver program. Stakeholder engagement is a recognized best practice for Medicaid HCBS programs and supports continuous quality improvement, transparency, accountability, and participant-centered decision-making.

Accordingly, we respectfully ask the Department to:

1. Resume regular NHTD Waiver reform stakeholder meetings.
2. Set a predictable meeting schedule, at least monthly, with time for stakeholder questions and discussion.
3. Include providers, participants, advocates, RRDCs, and other key partners.
4. Share updates on program initiatives, policy development, CMS activities, quality improvement, and implementation timelines.
5. Establish a process for stakeholders to submit agenda topics and operational concerns before each meeting.

The NHTD Waiver has helped thousands of New Yorkers avoid institutionalization and remain engaged in their communities. The program's growth over the past two years demonstrates the substantial need for services available only through the NHTD waiver. Sustaining the program's strength requires ongoing partnership between the Department and those who deliver services every day.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with the New York State Department of Health to strengthen the NHTD Waiver and ensure that participants continue to receive high-quality, person-centered services. We respectfully request an opportunity to meet with Department leadership and ask that regular stakeholder discussions be reinstated as soon as practicable.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response and to renewed collaboration in support of New Yorkers served by the NHTD Waiver.

Respectfully,

The Undersigned Organizations

- Alliance of TBI & NHTD Waiver Providers
- Brain Injury Association of New York State (BIANYS)
- Center for Elder Law & Justice
- Center for Independence of the disabled, New York (CIDNY)
- Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State
- LeadingAge NY
- Medicaid Matters New York
- New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL)
- New York Legal Assistance Group
- The Home Care Association of New York State (HCANYS)
- The New York State Association of Health Care Providers (HCP)

CC: Commissioner McDonald

Megan Baldwin

Erin Kate Calicchia