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**Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY**

August 27, 2012

Danielle Holahan  
New York State Health Benefits Exchange  
New York State Department of Health  
VIA e-mail [exchange@health.state.ny.us](mailto:exchange@health.state.ny.us)

RE: Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Options

Dear Ms. Holahan:

As an employee for The Center for Independence of the Disabled and a person with a disability, I know firsthand the importance of having health coverage that covers my needs and those of the people that CIDNY serves. I understand that the Department of Health has the responsibility for choosing an EHB Benchmark that makes sense and covers all New Yorkers, whatever their conditions, under the Affordable Care Act. We would like for the Department of Health to assure any choice of a plan will not discriminate against any population group or individual and keep in mind the needs of New Yorkers with disabilities.

While going through the plans provided by the New York State Essential Health Benefits Study, I see that all plans provide basic coverage for people without health-related illnesses or chronic health conditions that require the availability of comprehensive and affordable health coverage, including durable medical supplies.

I, along with the New Yorkers with disabilities that I work with, require durable medical equipment such as: wheelchairs, walkers, shower chair, incontinent supplies, etc. Getting approval for durable medical equipment has been extremely difficult under most plans. The lack of this coverage has created barriers to maintaining independence, to working, to traveling and to leading productive lives for many New Yorkers. The Empire Plan (the State's plan for its employees) does cover some durable medical equipment; the Oxford Plan has specific monetary and equipment limitations that can comprise the ability of people with disabilities to maintain their independence and health. I urge you to make sure that any plan chosen covers the needs of New Yorkers with disabilities whose health and welfare depend on being able to get the health services and medical equipment they need.

Sincerely,

Ramon Santos  
Benefits Counselor

cc: Heidi Siegfried, Health Policy Director