

# A Year of Covid-19

It was just one year ago yesterday that the World Health Organization declared the Covid-19 pandemic, and all our lives changed dramatically. We mourn the loss of so many, and we are enormously grateful to frontline workers, but we also celebrate the resilience, kindnesses and sense of community—including our SDMNY community—that have gotten us through this terrible year.

Yesterday was also a day of hope (and not just because of the warm weather!) when President Biden signed the \$1.9 Billion Covid Relief Bill. You've probably heard a lot about some parts of it—\$1400 checks to many people, extending unemployment benefits, money for schools, the Covid vaccine, etc. but there is a very important piece that hasn't been mentioned much, or at all, on the news.

## **The Covid Relief Bill increases federal funding for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) for people with disabilities by 7.35% for the next year!**

HCBS are the supports that allow people with disabilities to remain in the community and to live good and inclusive lives, rather than having to live in institutions. They include personal assistance, day services, supported employment, case management, caregiver supports, transportation, home delivered meals, assistive technology, home modifications and, in New York, SDM facilitation! People with disabilities have suffered a lot during the pandemic, and increased funding for HCBS is important, not just because of the added money, but also because it recognizes and values the needs of people with disabilities.

We don't know yet exactly what this will mean for New York,  
but we should definitely celebrate this very

## **GOOD NEWS**

and thank all the advocates, including our friends at ASAN (the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network) and CPR (the Center for Public Representation) for their hard work in making this happen for our community!