

## SDM AND SDMNY SHINE AT STATE'S LARGEST GATHERING OF PERSONS IN THE I/DD FIELD; OPWDD COMMISSIONER EXPRESSES STRONG SUPPORT

Every April the Sagamore Hotel in Bolton Landing, NY hosts a gathering of the largest group of people involved in the I/DD field in the state, from provider agencies to Self-Advocates, parents and siblings to high level staff from OPWDD (some 30, by our count). This year's 3-day conference, run by the New York Alliance on Inclusion and Innovation, was the largest ever, with more than 730 attendees, and was preceded by a 1-day "pre-conference" focusing on Innovative Approaches to on Housing. Through all four days, SDM as a practice, the new SDMA statute, and the progress and accomplishments of SDMNY's implementation were in the spotlight.

On Tuesday, at the pre-conference, the important connection between SDM, SDMAs and Self-Direction was highlighted in the conversation about increasing non-certified housing choices for people with I/DD. At the main conference, OPWDD Commissioner Kerri Neifeld spoke passionately about OPWDD's commitment to advancing SDM and incorporating that commitment across OPWDD's operations. Later, at the awards banquet, she was presented with the Distinguished Public Service award after SDMNY's Founding Director, Kris Glen received the Community Advocacy Award for "incredible contributions in the disability and human service community through her time, actions, talents and dedication." Kris got a standing ovation for her remarks praising New York for leading the US, and indeed the entire world in its implementation of the human right of legal capacity, and her grateful acknowledgement of the contribution of the I/DD community to our work. In a well-attended afternoon session, enthusiastic participants heard about SDMNY's work on the OPWDD implementation grant from SDMNY Director Naomi Brickel, and about the forthcoming SDMA regulations from OPWDD Senior Attorney Haldan Blecher.



*Award ceremony, Kris and Commissioner Neifeld, center, Ann Hardiman, far right*

In addition to all of this formal recognition, we were thrilled at the number of conversations about SDM and the ongoing SDMNY pilot that occurred spontaneously, including a question from many individuals and organizations, "How do we get involved in this exciting new practice?" We were also delighted to see so many friends who have partnered or otherwise worked with us over these past 7 years, including Ann Hardiman, former Executive Director of NYSACRA, the NY Alliance's predecessor organization, Desiree Loucks- Baer, now COO of the National Alliance of Direct Service Providers, Chris Lyons and his staff from AIM Services, Bridget Cariello from SANYS who was the first director of our Long Island expansion site, and folks from several of our current Facilitation partner agencies and organizations like ACMENY, Independent Support Services, Lifeplan, Advanced Care Alliance. As well, we made many new friends, contemplated potentially profitable collaborations, and returned home tired but exhilarated at how very far we have come from the first, theoretical/aspirational presentation on SDM at the same conference, almost exactly a decade ago!

**THANKS TO THE NEW YORK ALLIANCE FOR A GREAT CONFERENCE,  
TO COMMISSIONER NEIFELD FOR HER OUTSPOKEN SUPPORT,  
AND ALL THE PARTICIPANTS FOR THEIR EMBRACE OF SDM  
AND THE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF PEOPLE WITH I/DD!**