

FIRST STATE-WIDE SDM FORUM HELD IN SARATOGA SPRINGS

This week marked another step forward in our OPWDD-funded facilitation delivery model implementation plan as representatives from partner agencies gathered on Tuesday in Saratoga Springs for a first-ever Supported Decision-Making Forum, graciously hosted by our friend and partner, Chris Lyons of AIM Services. (sadly, Saratoga racing is done for the season, so no one wore a fancy hat!)

The stated goal of the forum was to “bring people together to coalesce around a common vision of SDM to build enthusiasm and momentum for the next stage of scale-up for New York State’s SDM model” and to “collaborate to create statewide strategies.” By all accounts it was a great success.



Supported Decision-Making Forum participants

In addition to representatives of 11 provider agencies from across the state, participants included our partner the New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation, Statewide Housing Navigators, representatives from OPWDD, and former OPWDD Executive Deputy Commissioner (and longtime SDM champion) Roger Bearden who shared some of the history that has gotten us this far. We were thrilled to hear him say that

"I am proud to have worked with so many amazing people to help create the legal framework to recognize the autonomy and free choice of people with disabilities "

Participants spent the day in substantive sessions and an interactive 2-hour discussion intended to provide us with feedback and perspective from active agency partners already providing facilitation, potential partners, and other stakeholders/experts in housing, self -direction and traditional services.

The enthusiasm generated was contagious and followed into the reception and dinner at a favorite local eatery, where ideas continued to flow, and relationships deepened.



The SDMNY and AIMS teams

SDMNY Director Naomi Brickel commented:

"For me a big lightbulb from this event was a realization of the vast experience and skills that we are leveraging in training staff from our partner agencies who provide facilitation services. Hearing perspectives of recently trained staff, currently working with Decision-Makers within our process, and the insights they had about needs and innovation, was somewhat humbling and made me realize we have much more to do to incorporate their rich perspective, knowledge, experience, and passion!"

Host Chris Lyons summed up the day this way:

"I cannot overstate the success of the SDM Forum. Knowing it will change lives and bring authenticity to the promise of true self determination, I am inspired by the coalescing of so many stakeholders around a commitment to make real the intent of the new SDM legislation... We are bigger than the sum of our parts and our collective mission, to support individuals in imparting meaning in their lives on their terms, in an independent and least restrict environment, comes closer to realization."

THANKS TO CHRIS AND AIMS, AND ALL WHO PARTICIPATED FOR CONTINUING TO ADVANCE SDM AND EVERYONE’S RIGHT TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS!