



# NY Connects:

## Choices for Long Term Care

Statewide Update  
November 2008

David A. Patterson, Governor

Michael J. Burgess, Director

## NY Connects in Year 3: Local programs provide essential services to consumers

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 NY Connects in Year 3: Local programs provide essential services to consumers
- 2 NY Connects Data Proves to be Essential to Long Term Care Councils as They Respond to Gaps in Services
- 3 Consumers Report Satisfaction with NY Connects at the Local Level
- 4 Current Working Projects

As **NY Connects** enters its third year of operation, programs across New York State continue to provide quality, unbiased information and assistance to those needing long term care services and supports. In doing so, they are promoting people's right to choose the services and supports that make the most sense for them, as well as the ability to remain at home and in their community as best as possible.

Though counties remain at varying levels of program development, the commitment to the success of **NY Connects** in serving older adults, people of all ages with disabilities and their caregivers is strong. Counties have put forth significant efforts towards overcoming obstacles and barriers to implementing an effective Information and Assistance program and making their **NY Connects** even stronger as an essential component of long term care reform.

### Information and Assistance

Currently, the number of counties that are fully operational- providing information and assistance - totals 51 (94%) out of 54 participating programs. Between July 2007 and June 2008 there have been 108,529 contacts to **NY Connects**. These numbers are reflected across all participating counties and include diverse demographic representation. Individual county contact numbers have been shown to vary depending on the size and demographics of the county. For example, among selected counties with a primarily rural population, Orange County received 1,768 contacts and Genesee County received close to 800 calls between April and June of 2008. Among selected counties with a large urban population, Schenectady County reported 7,458 contacts and Monroe County reported 3,284 contacts during that same time period.

The top 10 areas of Information provided between January and March 2008 included: Utility Payment Assistance, Personal Care, Home Delivered Meals, Health Insurance Information and Counseling, Case/Care Management, Home Health Care, Medicaid, Medicare Information/Counseling, Medical Transportation, and Advocacy.

---

*"94% of participating local programs are providing information and assistance to consumers."*

---

### Public Education – Statewide Campaign

---

*“NY Connects will develop a statewide campaign that will build upon existing public education activities....”*

---

This year will continue to focus on the promotion and marketing of **NY Connects** to the general public. **NY Connects** will develop a statewide public education campaign, the goal of which will be to increase awareness and visibility of the program. The campaign will accompany those efforts already undertaken at the local level. NYSOFA and **NY Connects** have recently developed a statewide brochure that will be distributed across the state. Promotional efforts will also feature strategies that incorporate diverse statewide media and outreach efforts. Planning for the Statewide Public Education Campaign began in Year 2 and will continue throughout Year 3.

## NY Connects Data Proves to Be Essential to Long Term Care Councils As They Respond to System Gaps

Across the state Long Term Care Councils are reviewing the long term care system at the local level to determine gaps and barriers to accessing services and supports. It is often difficult for consumers and/or caregivers to find appropriate long term care services during times of need. Trying to access information and services is many times confusing and overwhelming. To add to this, consumers may also experience difficulty obtaining services as a result of stringent financial and program eligibility requirements, age restrictions, and other such barriers that may negatively impact their experience.

The analyses conducted by **NY Connects** Long Term Care Councils will help to specifically target and address problems locally. Across the State, the total membership of the local Councils is over 1,450. Fifty-two (52) counties have Long Term Care Councils, and are comprised of consumers, caregivers, advocates, providers, and local government representatives.

The Councils are active in identifying gaps in services and supports within their communities and developing solutions to individual and systems-level problems. For example, a review of data reports can inform the Councils about which services may be unavailable or difficult to access in the community. This information can then be provided to key political decision makers to help influence future policy directions and the way that services are delivered.



*Upstate Long Term Care Advisory Council member, Richard Iannello, Director of the Albany Guardian Society, discusses an issue at the June 11 meeting*



*New York State Office for the Aging Director Michael Burgess and staff answer questions at the June 11 Upstate LTCAC meeting*

## Consumers Report Satisfaction with NY Connects at the Local Level

**NY Connects** programs have been responding to increased numbers of contacts in the last program year, which can be attributed to program success and satisfaction. In fact, many **NY Connects** programs have already begun measuring the satisfaction of the individuals that they are assisting. The results of these evaluations demonstrate that **NY Connects** is an essential resource to both consumers and providers. The vignettes below provide a sampling of positive consumer contacts addressed by local **NY Connects** programs.

Allegany County reported on a successful contact that they recently received.

*We received a referral from a local doctor's office about a woman under 60 who recently found out that she had a bone disorder, which was making her disabled and unable to work. She had no insurance and was having difficulty getting around the house. We were able to link her with organizations that would assist her with her mortgage, emergency services through DSS, and food pantries. We were also able to get her a wheelchair with a leg support through linkage with an outside partner agency. She has called us a few times since and thanked us for all of our work and "making things seem okay".*

---

*"...Words just aren't enough to tell you how much I value you and thank you for all you've done for me and my family..."*

*-Steuben County Caregiver*

---

Steuben County recently worked with a caregiver who needed help through crisis with both her parents needing help at the same time.

*We helped the daughter define her parents' needs, presented options, and helped her connect with the right people to provide the necessary services. Her Thank You note to us included the following: "...Words just aren't enough to tell you how much I value you and thank you for all you've done for me and my family. Thank you again!"*

Erie County conducted a satisfaction survey of consumers that contacted the **NY Connects** program. A majority of the responses were very positive. Some of which were as follows:

*"I received the information I was looking for in a matter of minutes."*

*"Staff person went out of her way to explain all of the questions that I had. She went above and beyond."*

*"Staff person was prepared with the caller's options and who to contact next without being placed on hold."*

*"It is wonderful to know that this resource is available to seniors."*

*"I will recommend this service to friends who are in similar situations."*

## Current Working Projects

### NY Connects Information and Assistance Training Offered in 4 Different Locations

In order to ensure the provision of reliable Information and Assistance service delivery throughout New York State, NYSOFA and **NY Connects** staffs, in conjunction with the SUNY Albany Center for Excellence in Aging Services, have produced a **NY Connects** Training Manual and CD that will provide comprehensive training to staff providing information and assistance services for **NY Connects** at the local level. The Training Manual and CD will be introduced during four one day training sessions held at different locations across the state. These sessions are specifically designed for the front line Information and Assistance staff and their supervisors. The first session held in Albany on October 28<sup>th</sup> was well attended and received high marks. Future trainings will be held on:

**November 7** (*Long Island*)  
**November 20** (*Geneva*)  
**November 21** (*Utica*)

### Program Satisfaction Survey Pilot

To measure the satisfaction and the effectiveness of **NY Connects** by for those contacting the program, a Program Satisfaction Survey has been released. 18 counties are able to participate in pilot testing the survey. Counties were invited to participate based on expressed interest and capacity to generate an adequate survey response because they meet the criteria of having the right amount of contacts to make it worthwhile. The survey will be self-administered and available to complete online, by mail, or in-person at the local **NY Connects**. Results will be available in early spring, 2009.

## NY Connects Presentations

### July 2008 – November 2008: NY Connects Building Connections Workshops

The final **NY Connects** Building Connections Workshop was held on November 6 in Oneonta. **NY Connects** and NYSOFA held six successful and effective workshops throughout the state.

### October 16 and 17: NY Connects Learning Forums for Western and Central NY

**NY Connects** and DOH staff provided an update on the programmatic and fiscal status and direction of the program to the counties. These forums were held on October 16 in Buffalo and October 17 in Syracuse.

### November 12 and 13: Empowering Communities for Successful Aging...Housing, Neighborhood Supports, and Services

This 2 day conference will be held in Saratoga Springs and will feature a panel presentation by **NY Connects** staff from the state and local levels.

#### NYS Office for the Aging

2 Empire State Plaza  
 Albany, NY 12223

Phone:  
 518-474-6096

Fax:  
 518-486-2225

E-mail:  
[Jessica.Fontaine@ofa.state.ny.us](mailto:Jessica.Fontaine@ofa.state.ny.us)

