

Media Release

For Immediate Release by Carrie Redman

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**Assemblyman Joe Sempolinski Visits The Arc Allegany-Steuben
to Discuss Key Issues Affecting People with Disabilities**

WELLSVILLE - The Arc Allegany-Steuben recently welcomed Assemblyman Joe Sempolinski for a visit with associates, self-advocates, and administration. The visit provided an opportunity for meaningful conversation about issues affecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their families, the direct support workforce, and communities throughout New York State.

The Arc Allegany-Steuben is grateful to Assemblyman Sempolinski for taking time from his busy schedule to meet directly with members of our organization and the people we support. Engaging directly with people with I/DD and the professionals who support them is an important part of understanding the opportunities and challenges facing New York's disability service system.

"It was wonderful to have an opportunity to sit down with The Arc Allegany-Steuben CEO Mike Damiano, members of his team and several Arc clients/self-advocates to talk about issues impacting folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities and what I'm doing in Albany as a member of the People with Disabilities Committee to ensure that agencies like The Arc Allegany-Steuben receive support they need to provide services to the I/DD community. New York has a \$277 billion budget. We spend too much in New York State, but not enough taking care of our most vulnerable citizens. I'm working to change that," said Assemblyman Joe Sempolinski, 148th Assembly District.

During his visit, discussions focused on several important issues affecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including:

- Community-based services and individual choice: The potential impact of recent federal legal guidance on disability services, community inclusion, and individual choice.
- Federal funding reductions: New York State's plans to address anticipated federal funding reductions while protecting essential services and supports.
- Service sustainability: Ensuring continued access to quality, community-based services for people with I/DD.
- Workforce challenges: Recruitment and retention of direct support professionals and other essential human service workers.
- State funding: The need for adequate and sustainable funding to maintain and strengthen services and supports.

The Arc Allegany-Steuben believes that direct engagement between elected officials and the I/DD community is essential to developing effective policies and making informed decisions about the future of disability services in New York.

“We appreciate Assemblyman Sempolinski taking the time to visit with our associates, self-advocates, and administration,” said Mike Damiano, Chief Executive Officer of The Arc Allegany-Steuben. “These conversations are important because the people most directly affected by public policy deserve a seat at the table. We encourage all elected officials and candidates to spend time with the I/DD community, listen to their experiences, and learn firsthand about the services and supports that make a difference in people's lives.”

The Arc Allegany-Steuben looks forward to continuing to engage with elected officials and community leaders and to advocating for policies and funding that promote choice, inclusion, independence, opportunity, and a strong support system for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
