To: Friends, Families, Employees and Supporters of Schenectady ARC

From: Kirk M. Lewis, Executive Director

Re: Update on the Coronavirus and our response

March 27, 2020

I want to give a brief update on the coronavirus pandemic and how we are responding here at Schenectady ARC. I first want to acknowledge our outstanding employees, who have been absolutely amazing in changing schedules, adapting to protective procedures, and in helping the people we support cope with this unprecedented public health emergency. Their response has been incredible, and we have continued to provide the highest quality supports and services even under the most challenging circumstances.

Operationally, we have made a number of changes to keep everyone safe. On March 13, we closed our day programs for one day, to assess how to respond to the rapidly changing environment, and on the following Monday we decided to close all day programs for at least two weeks. The state directed that all day programs be closed that Wednesday. We have since redeployed our day employees to other operations.

Our Pine Ridge Industries has been packaging and shipping plastic pipettes, which are an essential part of the testing and research going on with the coronavirus. As an essential business, Pine Ridge Industries’ operations have continued, but with screening and other measures for everyone who enters the building. The production team there is very proud of the role they are playing in helping to fight the virus.

At our residences we are taking a number of precautions to reduce the possibility of infection. At the direction of OPWDD, we have temporarily banned visitors from all of our houses. OPWDD also has directed that individuals should not leave our residences for short visits with family or friends: if people leave, they must be prepared to stay out of the residence for the duration of the coronavirus emergency. We have also implemented screening measures for all employees at our houses, including taking the temperature of all employees at the start of every shift. Again, our goal is to keep everyone as safe as possible.

All of our other operations have either been shut down or significantly reduced. Our clinic at State Street is providing health care using telemedicine. We are also using a telemedicine model to provide a variety of clinical and other supports, following the guidance issued by the state. With great regret, we have decided to cancel our Food Truck Event (scheduled for May 16) as it appears highly unlikely that we will be able to have a large group gathering that soon.

We know this is an extremely challenging time for everyone. We are committed to doing the best we can for the people we support and our valued employees, and we will continue to keep everyone informed as events develop. Please feel free to email me (KirkL@sarcny.org) if you have any questions.