

Senator Anthony M. Bucco

75 Bloomfield Avenue

Suite 302

3rd Floor

Denville, NJ 07834



The Honorable Philip D. Murphy
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

March 29, 2021

Dear Governor Murphy,

I am writing to you to express my concerns regarding the closure of congregate day programs funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). These programs are not only critical for many families in my district, but also for thousands of families throughout New Jersey. I am extremely concerned that their continued shutdown will have a severe impact on those who need these services the most.

As you know, thousands of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities attend congregate day programs in New Jersey. The programs are community-based, and give individuals the tools to learn new skills, build long-lasting friendships, and become caring, responsible adults. Unfortunately, the mandatory closures due to COVID-19 restrictions prevents this vital communal interaction.

According to the DDD website, "Programs may reopen starting March 29, 2021 so long as they meet the congregate day program re-opening requirements and fall within the required categories of the NJ Department of Health's COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI)." Strangely, these requirements are far more strict than those that apply to public schools, and will prevent most of the day programs from reopening. As I am sure you are aware, many schools in New Jersey remain open in some form for in-person instruction, even if those schools are located in counties with a "High" CALI rating.

I strongly urge that you reconsider the reopening protocols for these programs and allow day programs for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities to reopen. Now is the time to lift these burdensome restrictions that have been imposed on the congregate day programs so that they can effectively serve their local communities and the families of New Jersey.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony M. Bucco".

Senator Anthony M. Bucco
25th Legislative District

cc. Jonathan Seifried, NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities
Paul Aronsohn, Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities
Salvador Moran, The Arc/Morris County