



E-News - July 2013



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Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor - Jeff Wise, Executive Director

Protect People With Special Needs

If you see or suspect abuse or neglect by those who provide care to people with special needs, call the Justice Center Hotline at:
1-855-373-2122 - TTY: 1-855-373-2123

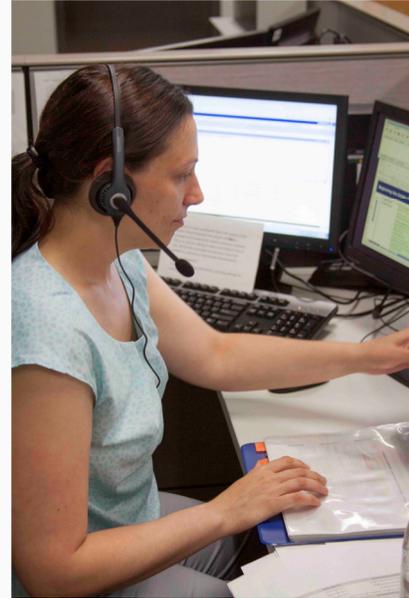
Governor Cuomo Announces Opening of Justice Center for People with Special Needs

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has announced the opening of the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs, a new state agency that will implement the toughest standards and practices in the nation to protect the special needs community from abuse and neglect. The Justice Center was created through legislation the Governor spearheaded last year to reform how the state cares for people with special needs. The agency began operations Sunday, June 30th.

“The Justice Center will be dedicated to implementing the strongest protections in the nation for over one million New Yorkers with special needs,” Governor Cuomo said. “Last year, we passed critical legislation which represented a commitment to establish these long overdue protections and now we are living up to that

commitment with the opening of this new, state-of-the-art agency."

The Justice Center will dramatically strengthen the level of monitoring, oversight and accountability of state operated, licensed or certified programs and facilities that serve more than one million New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, mental illness, substance abuse disorders and children in residential facilities. The agency will track, investigate and prosecute the most serious allegations of abuse and neglect against vulnerable individuals.



"We are committed to the fundamental principle that all New Yorkers with special needs are to be protected from abuse and neglect, and receive the best care possible," said Justice Center Executive Director Jeffrey Wise. "Our goal is that New York State is second-to-none in the nation in its system of care, support and service."

A key feature of the Justice Center is its operation of a statewide hotline and incident reporting system staffed by more than 70 trained professionals who receive reports of allegations of abuse and neglect 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Once a report is received by the Vulnerable Persons Central Register (VPCR) Hotline, it is logged and assessed. Serious cases of abuse or neglect are then assigned for investigation.

[Click here to read the full text of the Governor's news release.](#)

[Click here to access the Justice Center's new website.](#)

Service Providers Receive Code of Conduct

A new Code of Conduct must now be read and signed by custodians and other individuals who work with people with special needs served by programs operated, licensed or certified by state agencies. The Code of Conduct specifies the level of competency and core values expected from these custodians. It also represents a broad framework of guidance and requirements to help staff members achieve the goal of helping people with special needs live self-directed, meaningful lives in their communities, free from abuse, neglect and protected from harm.

The code was established as part of the the *Protection of People with Special Needs Act* which also created the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs. Current custodians who work in the system are required to read and sign the code each year. Newly hired staff must read and sign the code at the time of their employment. [Click here to read the entire Code of Conduct.](#)

35,000 Posters Get the Word Out

The Justice Center distributed some 35,000 posters during June to publicize its toll-free, 24 hour a day Hotline (1-855-373-2122) for reporting incidents of abuse and neglect of people with special needs. The posters, printed in both English and Spanish, were sent to thousands of care providers across New York with the help of the state agencies that operate or certify their programs.

In addition to the printed posters, PDF versions have been placed on the Justice Center's website that can be downloaded and printed ([available by clicking here](#)). A handy wallet card with the Hotline number is also available on-line



Hotline Posters Go Up Across New York

One of the 35,000 Justice Center Hotline posters distributed around the state goes up a facility operated by the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities.

as a PDF document that can be printed out. by anyone who needs it. It is also available at the link above.

Justice Center in the News

(click on links below to access each story)

[Rochester Democrat and Chronicle - "Justice Center Set to Open"](#)

[Albany Times Union - "State's streamlined Justice Center is ready to start"](#)

[WKBW-TV \(Buffalo\) - "Governor Cuomo Announces Opening of new Justice Center"](#)

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