Overview of Certified and Non-Certified Housing

{ 0:00 }
Good morning everyone. Today's a little different format. In the past we've sort of had a 30 to 40 minute PowerPoint presentation from one of our guest speakers and then time for questions and answers. Today it's going to be I'm going to keep give you a very brief introduction to what is a certified home, what is a non certified home. But then we're joined by four of our master housing navigators from different parts of the state to discuss their experiences as people providing certified settings and people providing non certified settings and to answer some of the the questions that you might have. And then we'll go into a general Q&A. So first of all, this is with a lot of our work is supported by the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. All of these slides, by the way, will be available to you at the end of the presentation.

{ 0:57 }
So I'm going to start with some myths about housing. For me, group living is an economic consideration, just as it would be for people who are in the typical community. There's still some kind of assumptions and cultural beliefs out there that people with disabilities should live together because that's what they've always done. There's nothing that says people with disabilities should live together. People with disabilities should live with whoever they choose to. Sometimes the economics of sharing staffing are appealing and necessary, but there's nothing to say that people with disabilities should be lumped together. A second myth is that certified is the only way to get care for people with high levels of need. Certified, as I hope you'll understand, it's not something sort of special seal of approval or you know 4 star type of housing.

{ 1:59 }
It's just funded differently with different regulation. There are people who are successfully living in the community who have very high levels of need and who are living in non certified setting. The third is that in terms of group living, there are economies of scale. It's interesting because from my observation, and I'd be interested in hearing from the master housing navigators, there are economies of scale. If you go from having one person in a home to having two and from 2:00 to 3:00 and even from three to four, although the quality tapers off at that point. But when you go to five or more, you start to need more staff to do more specialized support and you start to see in fact there are dis economies that the larger you get and the lastly that care is somehow a better in a certified setting.

{ 3:00 }
The direct support professionals who work both in certified and non certified setting are for the most part people who are dedicated, who are good at their jobs, and who care about the people that they support. And there's no difference between somebody working in a certified setting or somebody working in a non certified setting. So

what does a certified setting mean? In the 1970s when the federal government got involved in de institutionalizing the large institutions being had around the states, they said to the states, if you want to get Medicaid money, because Medicaid was instituted in the late 60s, if you want to get Medicaid money, you must certify that the housing complies with this set of guidelines as to what is reasonable and appropriate housing. So the states were given the task of certifying that the housing was compliant with those standards. The first ones were intermediate care facilities.

{ 3:55 }
So that's a step down from a nursing home, but nowhere near what we consider to be a typical community home. Then in the 1990s, with the advent of Medicaid waiver, individualized residential alternatives came on board. And we have two types of those, Supervised, which is 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and supportive, which is more geared to the needs of the individuals in the home. And so those are certified Iras and Icfs are certified settings. Also certified is family care, which is sort of a grown up foster care system where anything from one to five people can live with a family and kind of this follows a foster care type of of model.

{ 4:48 }
And then in terms of the folks who are applying for certified settings, they are sorted through the what's known as the Crow list, certified residential opportunities list, and their levels of need determine whether or not they will receive that kind of housing. So an emergency need is somebody who's in imminent danger or who is homeless. Substantial need is a step down from that. People who have a high level of people don't imminently or actually homeless and current need, which is sort of slightly longer term. And then there's non certified housing, which frankly is everything else. So it's just housing people living together with or without disabilities, living in the community. The myth is that somehow those non certified settings are not regulated. But I just want to quickly go over what those regulations are.

{ 5:42 }
So in New York State, the codes, rules and regulations or CRR, the certified settings, they are the levels that apply are part 624, 6:25 and 6:33 In a certified setting, if there is a an incident or a major complaint, it might reach to the Justice Center. The Department of Quality Insurance has an annual inspection as part of certification and all of the staff are mandated reporters, meaning that if they're aware of any abuse, they have a a legal obligation to report that to the appropriate authority. Non certified, they have part 624 and 6:25 as well. So if somebody's receiving community habilitation, for example, in their home, that is regulated just as it would be if they were living in a certified setting. The FI is is required or whoever is the employer of record is required to perform a background check if the housing is too hard. There are all kinds of hard regulations that go along with determining the quality of the housing.

{ 6:49 }
If they're receiving an OPWDD housing subsidy, then there is quality assurance that goes along with that and a participation agreement that says who does what involve

the kind of rights and responsibilities everybody involved has. So it's not as if they're not regulated at all. And you also have the oversight of the care coordination organization and the responsibilities of the care manager involved with the person in their housing. You have a support broker if that person is in self direction, so you have more eyes on what is happening in the person's living situation. And you have again, people providing direct support, professionals providing help through community habilitation or other services. So in fact, you have more transparency and more eyes on in a non certified setting. If you want to learn more about these two distinctions, I recommend that you look at the New York Housing Resource Centre website and the Housing Resource Guide. Chapter 2 is about certified and non certified housing. So 3 or 4.

{ 7:57 }
I think it's probably about 5 or 6 pages long, but it sets out what I just told you in more detail. And if you really want to go down the rabbit hole, look at the report we produced last year called Reclaiming Innovation in Housing. The link is below there and that describes in some detail what is certified housing, how is it funded and what is non certified housing and how is that funded. So recommend you have a look at those to get some more information. Carol, I think if you could just comment on this section. I know this is a new section so.

Speaker 2: { 8:34 }
Yeah, absolutely. What's so important for us is to understand, you know, feedback for sessions. It helps us to design future sessions and also it gives us an opportunity of hearing what else do you want to learn about. And for today's presentation, certified and non certified, that really came from a recommendation from one of our previous sessions.

{ 8:59 }
So what I'm going to ask you to do is to and I'll put the link to the survey into the chat box. But if you also have the opportunity to use that QR code with your smart device and do the survey at the end of this today's session, I'd be greatly appreciated. Thank you, John. OK.

Speaker 1: { 9:18 }
So I'm going to stop sharing my screen and I'm going to introduce Hank Lob and Derek Taylor. And Hank and Derek, you're on. Hank is the master housing navigator for Region 3. So Central New York and the Southern Tier. It's Region 2, sorry, Hank, which is Central New York and the Southern Tier and Derek for Region 3, which extends, I think from Warwick County all the way down to the New York City line. So I'm going to, we have some questions we've discussed before.

{ 9:55 }
I'm going to put them to you both, but please feel free to riff however you see fit. And I'm going to ask Hank first if you could sort of briefly describe your agency's certified housing.

Speaker 3: { 10:10 }
Sure. So I work for an agency called Springbrook. We have 27 community homes all together, and we serve five different counties, Shenango, Madison, Otsego, Delaware and Broome, and we serve about 179 people in those homes.

Speaker 1: { 10:31 }
And how many people live in a typical certified home?

Speaker 3: { 10:36 }
Those are all typical certified homes, so.

Speaker 1: { 10:39 }
How many people in each home?

Speaker 3: { 10:41 }
So we have our largest home is 11 people, our smallest is 3, and we have about an average of just under 7 people per home.

Speaker 1: { 10:52 }
OK, Derek, I'll ask you the same questions. Roughly how many houses and how many people live in them?

Speaker 4: { 10:58 }
Sure. Good morning, everyone.

{ 11:00 }
My name is Derek Taylor. I work for AIM Services. We have 22 certified residences and we also have well 22 certified homes. And then we also have 14 supportive apartments which are certified as well. Typical house size in our agency is anywhere from 3:00 to 11:00 or I'm sorry, 12 and we have about 120. I think we serve 121 people.

Speaker 1: { 11:29 }
So do do you have instances where people are sharing rooms?

Speaker 4: { 11:33 }
We do. The numbers are exactly 25%. I just actually did them. 24 people that we support are sharing a room right now. It was much higher in the past, but we've done a really good job of expanding and, you know, and trying to repurpose different homes and different things so that people don't have to share a bedroom. Our philosophy is we're all adults. People should not have to share bedrooms.

Speaker 1: { 11:56 }
And and so give me an idea of what does the typical day look like when they're in the home?

Speaker 4: { 12:02 }
Typical day at our agency just depends. Every home has its own flavor. Every home is unique. A lot of our homes we have people who are retired. A lot of homes we have people who are active and engaged in the community, whether it be through supportive employment without walls. So you know, we don't have any bed times or any wake up times per SE unless somebody has to be up for a bus or transportation. They get up when they want. Usually they come down in the kitchen. They make their own breakfast. A lot of them are involved in cooking. They take their medication and stuff if they have to. They go out and do the thing for the day. They come home, they relax. It's pretty much they design their day themselves.

Speaker 1: { 12:46 }
Hank, I'll ask you the same question. What was the typical day look like?

Speaker 3: { 12:49 }
Yeah. And I'll just go back just so out of our 179 people we serve, sixteen of those people are there 16 shared beds.

{ 12:59 }
So 147 of we have 147 single rooms. But you know, very much like Derek, you know, if people want to have a job, they have a job. If they want to turn a day hab, they can certainly do that. You know, if they want to have day hab without walls or community hab, that's absolutely up to them or even self direction during the day. So it's varied a great deal. A lot of it depends on the House and the size, but you know, for the most part it's very individualized.

Speaker 1: { 13:29 }
OK. So just to switch gears a little bit, what is the cost to the person of the certified selling, so you know their SSI etcetera, snap and if you know roughly what is the cost to the state? So I'll ask that of Hank first.

Speaker 3: { 13:53 }
So I don't know exact cost because again, everyone's a little bit different.

{ 13:56 }
But when you do live in a certified home, you do have a increased rate of SSI. Typically that goes all to the agency with the exception of a believe $125.00 in in personal spending money which is obviously quite high for someone living in a certified setting.

Speaker 1: { 14:19 }
And so all of their SSISSDI, SNAP, everything else would would be run through the agency, yes.

Speaker 3: { 14:26 }
Absolutely.

Speaker 1: { 14:28 }
OK. And Derek, your experience?

Speaker 4: { 14:30 }
Yeah, it's the same, John. We pretty much have it figured out to the penny in terms of our room and board covers, what it covers and then any, you know that PA money is all that's left for them unfortunately. But with that said, I mean they never go without obviously. I mean, we're not strict on we have our budgets for our homes, but if we go over budget because there's something needed when then we do so.

Speaker 1: { 14:53 }
Got it.

{ 14:56 }
You both work closely with people who are in certified settings and you work with people who have non certified settings across across the whole range. Can you tell me what you see as the main differences? And I'll start with you, Derek.

Speaker 4: { 15:12 }
I see the main differences of the people just seem to have more choice and they don't seem to be as lonely. I know studies have shown that people that live with more people, the more people they live with the lonely they they become. And the people that are out living in the community just seem to, I don't want to say are happier, but some it's hard not to not to see that just have more choice.

Speaker 1: { 15:33 }
So you pick people who are living in the non certified setting and you say living in the community, correct? Yeah, Hank, what would you describe your experience?

Speaker 3: { 15:42 }
I I would agree with that. I do know that in creating non certified opportunities, there is, you know, limitations on what can be done.

{ 15:53 }
You know, it was something that we've often struggled with is supporting someone in non certified head setting who has a behavioral concern. Obviously non certified settings you can't guarantee staff are going to be there where if in a certified setting you know someone calls out someone's mandated to stay so they'll always have staff staffing.

Speaker 1: { 16:19 }
Do you find that for the folks that you support, if they're living in the community, if they're not certified that because you're an agency that you can find a substitute if that eventuality happens?

Speaker 3: { 16:35 }
So that, so you're asking if, if because we have both sides, if someone doesn't work

out in a non certified that we can? Well, no, because you'd still have to go through the crow list. So and the the crow list is the state list that, you know, someone would go on if if they wanted a certified setting. And that's based on, you know, opening.

{ 16:58 }
So if if we at Springbrook didn't have an opening in the certified setting, then that transfer wouldn't be as easy.

Speaker 1: { 17:05 }
So questions for both of you. The last question I have for you is, are there people who are living in your certified settings who you think could live in a non certified setting? And, and I guess I'll start with Derek.

Speaker 4: { 17:17 }
Absolutely. That's one of the main focuses of our opportunities committee that we have formed. While we meet twice a month, we sit down, we talk about those exact things, other people that are living in our certified sites that can and want to be living out in the non certified. We have quite the list actually. And it's not just people in support of which is what most people think. Most people think that that's the first, you know, first main step to go 1st and then they go into the non certified. We actually have quite a few people living in a certified sites that are ready to go.

Speaker 1: { 17:50 }
Hi, how was your experience?

Speaker 3: { 17:53 }
Same we have, we have several people and you know, I think we've all set and life plan what used to be ISP meetings, listening to, you know, reasoning why people can't move out on their own. And I think it really takes that person to say, you know, hey, I, I can do this or there are supports in place that you can do with non certified living that that would allow a person that opportunity.

Speaker 1: { 18:19 }
I would say this that both of you represent first class agencies and with progressive thinking and and a sort of a modern approach to housing. So I'm very glad that you could both talk about that. And I assigned you the certified discussion rather than the non certified discussion, but you both do both and do them very well. So we're going to switch for a moment and ask Trish calendar and Marietta, Austin. Marietta is the master housing navigator of Region 4, which is New York City. And Trish, I hope you're still there.

{ 18:58 }
There's Trish, Trish's Region 5, which is Long Island and they got the luck of the draw that that I'm going to talk to them about non certified settings and I'll start with Marietta. Marietta, briefly describe your work, what you're doing with people in non certified housing if you could.

Speaker 5: { 19:19 }

And so I work with a lot of multiculturally diverse families and some of those individuals do not want to be in a certified setting. They would prefer making their own choices as to the days that they want to, what they want to do for their day, if they want to start a business, what they want their staff to do for them. And so basically that is the group of individuals that I pretty much support.

Speaker 1: { 19:47 }
And then Trish, how, how about your experience?

Speaker 6: { 19:50 }
Yeah, so I am a self direction broker as well, helping people who some transitioning from certified to non certified as well as just generally people who want to live their own lives in the communities of their choices. So yeah, that's kind of it in a nutshell.

Speaker 1: { 20:13 }
Do do the folks that you work with, Trish, do they live alone or do they live with others? What's how does that work out?

Speaker 6: { 20:21 }
Sure, it's a combination of both. I have some folks who prefer to live alone. I actually am supporting a young man who always said he wanted to live alone and suddenly now said I, I'm I'm getting a little lonely. I think I might want to explore living with a roommate. So we're trying to make that happen for him. So lots of individuals who, because of the cost here on Long Island, would like to do shared living because it's the only sort of option that they can make it work for them.

{ 20:54 }
You know, our, our rents for a one bedroom down here start at like 2120 two $100.00. So it's almost impossible for people to find something that's affordable. So we sort of look to combine if we can. We always try to make it work the way the person wants. I always say we go for utopia and then we sort of work backwards.

Speaker 1: { 21:17 }
Understood. Marietta, what's your experience in terms of people living together, people living individually by themselves?

Speaker 5: { 21:26 }
So many of the individuals that I support live with someone but would prefer living alone, whether it be a family member, whether it be a roommate, but they would prefer living alone where they can pretty much make their own decisions and not have to worry about what the other roommate likes or does not like or family member.

Speaker 1: { 21:47 }
And, and how did the economics work on that?

Speaker 5: { 21:50 }
Well, many of the many of the people that I support are either receiving SSI or SSDI

through a parent and so along with their housing subsidy, but it still has not been enough for them to sort of venture out on their own and pay the rent on their own got.

Speaker 1: { 22:10 }
It and to Trish, what can you describe a typical day for somebody living in an uncertified setting? Granted, nobody's typical, but what's a typical day?

Speaker 6: { 22:20 }
Yeah, well, I, you know what, I serve a mix of people. So we have some people that they want to get up and get going for their day and start, you know, having staff come when they're ready to go out in early in the morning, if they want to go to the gym, whatever they want to do. The beauty of self direction, right, is the freedom of choice. So I can speak personally from my I have two children who share together as well and they completely live separate lives and have, you know, my daughter is really not ready to go till about 10:00 AM. My son's ready to go by 8830.

{ 22:57 }
You know, so they definitely have different lifestyles of of choice. My daughter's more of a homebody. My son loves to be outside and and out and about same with I have another individual that, you know, where we found that he really wasn't a good morning person and he had a job that he had to get up for and he was constantly late and was, you know, going to lose that job if he couldn't get there in time. And then once we talked to the employer, the employer was like, we have a later shift and that worked out really well. So, you know, they not they're not sort of stuck between that nine to three time slot as they do in certified settings sometimes for that comhab daytime hours where we can shift people to the life that they want to live by. I have another young man who really is so social and gets out and goes to all these different clubs and meetups.

{ 23:53 }
There's some groups here on Long Island that have meetups together and it's really wonderful to see. And now he's he's always had this vision of living in a brick house with flower pots in the front. And I bring him up a lot and he now had to visit someone at an apartment complex and his whole mindset has changed. And now he wants to live in an apartment complex with some water nearby. So we're looking to fulfill his dream. And I will say that the best thing anybody can do is do really good person centered planning when you're looking at people moving because you really want to you get some exploration with somebody as to maybe thinking outside the box too or think thinking of different ideas, right, So.

Speaker 1: { 24:40 }
I think you just preaching to the converted here in terms of the value of the long term person centeredness rather than just quickly whipping off a plan because it looks good.

{ 24:54 }

Marietta in the city, you know, people always say well, every everything that's difficult in the state is more difficult in the city because you've got another layer of bureaucracy and you've got all the complexities of living in the city. So how does the day shape up for somebody, some of the people that you're supporting?

Speaker 5: { 25:12 }
Like like Trish said, you know, every individual is different. I have a young woman that started her own business and so her staff comes in about 10:00 in the morning, but she's already up ready to go based on the day before. This is what we're going to do the next day. And so everyone's life is different based on how they choose it. Some people are taking a class so they know they have to be at that class by a certain time. So it's, I think it's the ability to be able to decide this is what I want to do. And now I have people that are going to help me to accomplish that goal for my day, for my week, for my weekends.

Speaker 1: { 25:46 }
Understood.

Speaker 6: { 25:48 }
Can I just actually add one sort of like thing in there that really works for some of my groups too?

{ 25:55 }
You know, I know in certified, you know, there's like a log, you know, what sort of happens or you have that pass the baton to the next group as coming in for support. We're non certified. It could be somebody's not doesn't have staff for two hours in the middle of the day. So there is no crossover. So a lot of really good communication, like a group chat, group text between all the staff and actually knowing what everybody's doing is really kind of key to some successes too.

Speaker 1: { 26:26 }
Thanks, Trish. Yeah, that's, that's, that's just generic technology at work, right? It's not, it's not that complex. So I asked Hank and Derek the same question. What is the cost of the housing to the person and how does that work for most folks? I know obviously you've got the housing subsidy, but in terms of the budgeting, it's a little different because in the certified system, the money goes to the agency and the person gets a personal allowance. How does that work? And I'll, I'll start with many at that.

Speaker 5: { 26:58 }
Well, I believe that someone living out in the community, it's a fraction compared to someone that is actually living in a certified setting. How much it is, I don't know. As Hank said, but you're living so much more cheaper if you're living in the community as opposed to living in a certified setting.

Speaker 1: { 27:18 }
Trish, you've done budgets for I don't know how many people. How does? How does it look for you?

Speaker 6: { 27:23 }
And it's always different per person and how they want to live. So like I would say with good person centered planning, we look at utopia and then sort of bargain what could work. We've had people that, you know, really wanted to live in a house, but we talked about the upkeep for a house. You know, you have lawn mowing and snow removal, things like that, that really sometimes can't functionally work. So you, you know, you really have to sort of dig in and sometimes it's a compromise.

{ 27:51 }
It might be a condominium or a, a Co-op because those things are sort of taken care of through, through maintenance and payment. So you know, it's, it's kind of every, every person is different and every situation is different, but it's definitely, you know, you're not giving up and only getting 120, five, $30.00 a month for spending per SE from your Social Security because you're able to sort of look at some of the you don't spend 100% of your SSI necessarily for everything. So it's all a matter of, of working and what that looks like. And then, you know, maybe what we call family contribution shouldn't be called family contribution, right? So we look at able accounts, we talk to people and dig into all of the things that benefits, entitlements and and funding streams to make sure. And that's why housing navigation is so important because we know all of these things and what will make it work financially. But I do believe, and I have a daughter who came from certified, that this is much less costly.

Speaker 1: { 28:58 }
That's a, that's a good segue.

{ 28:59 }
I just be just to put in a plug, we had a wonderful presentation on Able accounts. You mentioned Able accounts from the office of the State Controller and that's in the library. And when we go to Carol, she can tell folks how to get to that. But in terms of you know you, you mentioned experience with certified and non certified can can you describe, I'll start with you Trish, can you describe how you see the differences?

Speaker 6: { 29:24 }
Yeah, I, you know, I, I think it's the risk versus reward from for my situation was why we pulled, you know, my daughter from a group home because they're so worried about safety and and so much. So sometimes to the over extent, because that's just sort of the agency policy and they have to be accountable and make sure that their notes and everything's aligning. Where in non certified you get the ability to give somebody sort of that risk versus reward.

{ 29:55 }
And you can use a lot more technology to maybe make that happen for somebody, whether it be through, you know, ring doorbells or camera systems that are meant for safety. Somebody, the feeling that they are, they, they don't know they're sort of being not watched, but giving them the the ability to do something on their own and having technology there to back it up instead of a person can be huge in some ways.

You know, you have to give people that risk to make a mistake and and learn from it as opposed to constantly standing over them. I don't know if I captured that correctly, but.

Speaker 1: { 30:43 }
That's a good perspective, Marietta.

Speaker 5: { 30:46 }
I just jumped in and say again, let's remember it's about the person, right? Whether it's residential, whether it's in a non certified certified, it's about the person, right?

{ 30:58 }
And many times the person's desires are different than other people's desires or family's desires. But again, it's about the person. And where do we move from the person being as happy as they want to be, where they're at?

Speaker 1: { 31:12 }
You have you had experience with somebody you were supporting in a in a non certified setting? Would want to go into a certified setting.

Speaker 5: { 31:21 }
I've not. I mean, I've had parents, but not the person themselves.

Speaker 1: { 31:24 }
And and to dig into that a little bit. So from the parent perspective, what do you think brings that out?

Speaker 5: { 31:33 }
I think it's the concern of the parent that someone is there to protect the child or the, the, the person, if they're not here, they're they're with an agency, the agency's going to make sure that things are, you know, in place. And I think it's that that concern of the parent that they feel that, you know, certified would be better than non certified if I'm no longer here.

Speaker 1: { 31:55 }
Trish, you deal with that as a parent too.

Speaker 6: { 32:00 }
You know, that's sort of golden like safety. People think people are safe, but also who's going to do all of the things that they are doing, say from a self-directed standpoint of figuring out Social Security, figuring out SNAP, figuring out all those things who in their circle would take care of that is a major concern. And that's why I try to teach people that there are mechanisms in place, but we haven't figured it all out, right? When we did self direction, we thought A to C instead of A-Z. So we need to come up with that missing opponent of component of what happens when we are gone and what we can do to sort of make it sustainable self-directed life or

independent living life. And you know, there are people that are looking to do that and work on it and we need people to help us in that, in that regard.

Speaker 1: { 32:49 }
Right. All right.

{ 32:50 }
I would say that there are certainly parts of the state where people have developed wrap around services to take the place of the parent advocate or other advocate when they're no longer able to do it. That seemed to me to be just as secure.

--- End of transcript ---