



April 26, 2021

Dear Families and Guardians,

I am pleased to announce that Advocates will be entering into an affiliation with HMEA, a well-known and widely respected human service agency based in Franklin, Massachusetts. Much like Advocates, HMEA offers a range of services for people affected by intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism. Some of the people we support are also served by HMEA, and several staff work across both organizations.

HMEA is a wonderful partner for Advocates and we are excited to formalize our longstanding relationship with them. We have known their leaders for many years, and we respect and trust them. Our mission and values are well-aligned, and our services and strengths are complementary.

We believe our partnership will strengthen our mission, create more opportunities for employees, and provide more options for you and your loved ones. It will also allow us to strengthen our presence in Central Massachusetts and expand our geographic footprint.

Most importantly, we want to assure you there will be no changes to or eliminations of programs or staff positions at Advocates. Your loved ones will continue to receive the same supports and services from Advocates, and the same program staff will continue to be available to you.

We are excited about our future! Beginning in July, our agencies will undertake a planning process to identify and adopt best practices across both organizations.

In the coming weeks, there will be opportunities to learn more during family forums hosted by members of our leadership team. In the interim, the attached FAQ is available for your reference, or you may reach out to Nicole St. Amand, Sr. Director of Marketing and Communications, at NSt.Amand@Advocates.org with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Diane Gould, LICSW
President and CEO

Advocates and HMEA Affiliation

Frequently Asked Questions for Families

What does “affiliation” mean?

Affiliation means that we have made a formal commitment to working in partnership with each other to expand our scope of services and create efficiencies that will help us better support people we serve and our staff.

Why is Advocates affiliating with HMEA?

This partnership provides for new opportunities for service expansion but also in our ability to best serve you and your loved ones. Between the two organizations we will have more opportunities to explore growth and provide the best services to meet the changing needs of people and families we serve and the expectations of our funders.

Did one organization acquire the other or is one organization now in charge?

This is not an acquisition. Each agency will retain its own name, identity, programs, staff, Board of Directors, 501c3 nonprofit status, and contracts with funders.

Will any programs change or be eliminated?

No, there will be no changes or eliminations of programs at Advocates. For the immediate future Advocates and HMEA will continue to operate programs independently. With time and relationship building we will naturally find ways to improve and enhance services by adoption of best practices across both agencies.

Will services for my loved one change?

No. You and your loved one will continue to receive the same services and supports you receive from Advocates currently.

Will the staff who work with my loved one change?

No. You and your loved one will continue to work with the same program staff at Advocates.

Will jobs be eliminated?

No, we don't anticipate any job losses at either organization as a result of the affiliation.

Where do I go if I have more questions?

We pledge to keep you informed along the way and will answer any questions or concerns you may have in a timely manner.

Please reach out to:

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