



## Department of Health

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

**HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.**  
Commissioner

**LISA J. PINO, M.A., J.D.**  
Executive Deputy Commissioner

January 21, 2021

DAL: DAL 20-28  
Subject: Extension for Spending- Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living (EQUAL) Program for State Fiscal Year 2019-2020

Dear Operator:

On August 22, 2019, the Department of Health (“Department”) announced the release of the \$6.5 million 2019-20 Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living (EQUAL) Program. These funds are available to Adult Care Facilities (ACFs) on a pro-rated basis allocated by the number of residents receiving Social Security Income, New York State Supplement Program, Safety Net, or Medicaid (if applicable), and such funds are intended to better the quality of life for ACF residents by enhancing resident services and improving the facility’s physical environment. Specifically, the governing statute at Social Services Law §461-s outlines the following allowable expenses:

*“(i) to improve the quality of life for adult care facility residents by funding projects including but not limited to, clothing allowances, resident training to support independent living skills, improvements in food quality, outdoor leisure projects, and culturally recreational and other leisure events....”; and*

*“(ii) to improve the quality of life for adult care facility residents by financing capital improvement projects that will enhance the physical environment of the facility and promote a higher quality of life for residents....”*

State Fiscal Year 2019-20 EQUAL award notifications were issued on October 25, 2019. Funding is provided upon award and ACFs were given one year to spend their award in full, with receipts due no later than November 1, 2020.

The Department understands that COVID-19 may have impacted the ability of certain ACFs to expend its State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2019-2020 EQUAL funds. To ensure that EQUAL funding is used as allocated, the Department will permit a time-limited extension of SFY 2019-20 EQUAL funding expenditure to allow facilities to assess their current, approved expenditure plans and propose any revisions to such plan if the ACF can demonstrate that the expenditure was delayed due to COVID-19. In accordance with Social Services Law §461-s(3), any proposed revisions to the expenditure plan must first be approved by the facility’s Residents’ Council.

Under this limited extension, facilities will have an additional six (6) months to expend their SFY 2019-20 EQUAL award. Specifically, if approved, revised spending will be permitted through April 30, 2021 with receipts due May 1, 2021.

Questions regarding the EQUAL Program should be directed to Georgina Raus, of my staff, at (518) 408-1133 or via email to [equal@health.ny.gov](mailto:equal@health.ny.gov).

Sincerely,

Heidi L. Hayes, Acting Director  
Division of Adult Care Facilities  
and Assisted Living Surveillance

cc: J. Treacy  
M. Hennessey  
V. Deetz  
K. Pergolino  
G. Raus