People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities have the same health care needs as people without disabilities. However, the health care system does not adequately address their needs. Studies have repeatedly found gaps in healthcare services for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, from dental care to preventive care.

This session will outline the barriers to care people with developmental disabilities face and introduce providers to working with people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Two experts in the field will share their experience working with people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and what providers need to do to treat people with culturally competent care. The session will close out with a conversation with a person with lived experience so providers can hear directly from a person with a developmental disability on what they need when accessing the healthcare system.

**Moderator:**

James V. McDonald, MD, MPH
Commissioner, New York State Department of Health

James V. McDonald, MD, MPH, was appointed Acting Commissioner of Health January 5, 2023. Prior to joining the New York State Department of Health in July 2022, Dr. McDonald served as the Medical Director of Health Care and as President of McKinley Health Sciences and the Drug Treatment program in Virginia. He has been a member of the Governor’s Health Care Review Commission and the Governor’s Medical Control Board. Dr. McDonald earned his MD from the University of Chicago Medical School in Chicago, Illinois. He completed his residency in Family Medicine as well as a Preventive Medicine residencies in New York State and at the University of Virginia School of Medicine.

**Special Appearance:**

Kerri Neifeld, M.S.W.

Kerri Neifeld was the Governmental Affairs Director at the Mental Health Association of Columbia and Greene Counties and was appointed Special Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner by Governor Kathy Hochul in early November of 2021. Prior to her nomination, Kerri served as a Policy Associate for the office of the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. She is passionate about improving quality of care for individuals with disabilities in medical settings and will share her experience in this session.

**Speakers:**

**Dr. Stephen Sulkes, MD**

Dr. Stephen Sulkes is Professor and Chair of the Department of Optometry and Director of the Education and Continuing Education Center at the New York College of Optometry. She has over 30 years of experience in optometry and has held numerous leadership positions in the field. She is known for her expertise in ocular motor disorders and has contributed significantly to the field of optometry. Dr. Sulkes will be sharing her knowledge on the importance of ocular motor therapy for individuals with developmental disabilities.

**Dr. Vincent Siasoco, MD, MBA**

Dr. Vincent Siasoco is the Interim Director of Health and Wellness at UAlbany and served as the Chief of Staff and Interim Director of Outpatient Medicine in Chinle, Arizona. He earned a doctorate in Internal Medicine from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and a Master of Business Administration from the Robert Willumstad School of Business at Adelphi University. He is passionate about serving underserved populations and has a particular interest in health equity and access to care for individuals with developmental disabilities.

**Dr. Izel Obermeyer, OTR/L, ATP, BCTS, FAOTA**

Dr. Izel Obermeyer is a board-certified Occupational Therapist and has over 20 years of experience in occupational therapy. She specializes in working with individuals with developmental disabilities and has conducted numerous research studies in this area. She will be sharing her expertise on how occupational therapy can improve quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities.

**Claire Polin Self Advocate**

Claire Polin is a self-advocate and a member of the New York City organized community for individuals with disabilities. She is known for her advocacy work and has been an active participant in various disability rights organizations. Claire will share her personal story and her experiences as a person with a developmental disability.