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**NYS Is Not Meeting All of the Educational and Rehabilitation Needs of  
Children, Youth and Adults with Vision Loss**

*Children who are blind and visually impaired are “children with disabilities” covered under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and children and adults who are blind and visually impaired are covered under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its amendments*

**Lack of NYS credentialing for Orientation and Mobility Specialists and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists creates a statewide systemic problem that impedes full compliance with IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act.**

**NYS does not evaluate or provide services in a timely manner to meet the needs of people of all ages (infants to elders) who are blind and visually impaired.**

- Children who are blind and visually impaired must be evaluated and served in all areas related to their disability. This includes Braille, Orientation & Mobility, and safety and skills of daily living. Blind children wait or don't get evaluations and services. Blind adults and elders wait for assessments and services.
- Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialists and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRTs) are professionals with the skills and qualifications to conduct orientation and mobility and daily living skills evaluations and provide services for blind children and adults required by the federal IDEA and Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- O&M and VRT are not credentialed by NYS or recognized by the NYS Office of the Professions. This makes it difficult to recruit people into the professions.
- The lack of a NYS credential means that state and county health departments overseeing early intervention, schools/education entities and nonprofit and government agencies have difficulty finding and retaining O&M and VRT professionals with the skills and qualifications to evaluate and provide mobility, Braille and daily living skills training for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age children to age 21, adults and elders who are blind.
- This is a systemic statewide problem. Licensure is one solution for the problem!