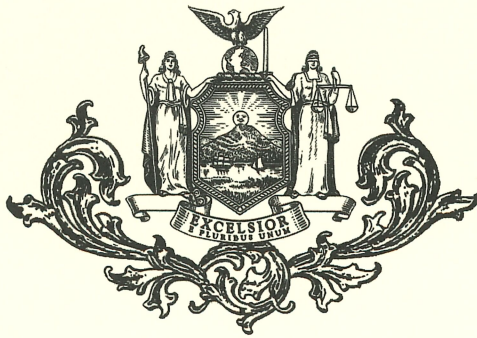




State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, New York State recognizes dedicated professionals who provide life-enhancing services for people who are blind and have low vision, and we join to recognize the community of Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRTs) who help New Yorkers who are blind or visually impaired in critically important ways; and

Whereas, there are over 400,000 New Yorkers who are blind or have low vision, and our state has been at the forefront of helping our New Yorkers with blindness or have vision loss improve their lives, both for the benefit of the individuals themselves and for all society; and

Whereas, on April 30, 1913, the New York State Commission for the Blind was established and, in that same year, New York State first employed a "Home Teacher" for the blind—which is the original occupational title for the professionals known today as Vision Rehabilitation Therapists; and

Whereas, through the collaboration of federal, state, and local agencies alongside nonprofit organizations and universities, VRTs carry out the important work of delivering independent living skills to New Yorkers who are blind or have low vision in their homes and places of employment, and assisting them in using technology such as smartphones and helpful apps, and text-to-speech technology, as well as more traditional skills such as braille, cooking, maintaining a home, and financial management; and

Whereas, blindness and vision loss constitute a significant disability affecting all aspects of independent living, and we extend appreciation to New York State's community of professional VRTs who have devoted themselves to a career of improving the lives of New Yorkers who identify as having a visual disability and to providing pathways of opportunity for them; and

Whereas, the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) is a membership organization, with an active chapter here in New York State, that supports the work of professionals who provide services to persons with vision loss; the AER observes "Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Appreciation Week" and commemorates April 14—the birthday of Anne Sullivan—as a day to honor her as one of the first Home Teachers and as the teacher of Helen Keller, the author and noted advocate for individuals with disabilities; and

Whereas, during this week-long observance, New Yorkers join to recognize VRTs who continue their work to create a world of fewer limitations for people who are blind or have low vision by supporting and advocating for their independence and self-determination, while improving the lives of every New Yorker by promoting employment and integration of individuals with blindness and vision loss into our communities, schools, workplaces, and other public areas they should have access to;

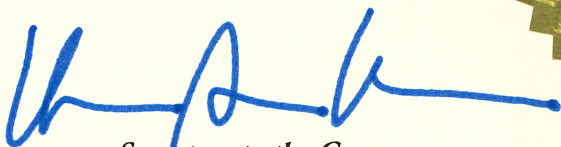
Now, Therefore, I, Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim April 13 - 19, 2025 as

VISION REHABILITATION THERAPIST APPRECIATION WEEK

in the Empire State, with April 14th, the birthday of Anne Sullivan, as a special day of recognition.

G i v e n under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State
at the Capitol in the City of Albany this eleventh day
of April in the year two thousand twenty-five.




Secretary to the Governor
Karen Persichilli Keogh


Governor