**NDSS Holds First Post Pandemic Conference**

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) held its first Down Syndrome Advocacy Conference since 2019 in April.

More than 350 advocates from across the country joined in for three days of connection and education on legislative priorities that impact the Down syndrome community.

This two-day event with optional pre-conference learning sessions was designed to bring the community together to advocate for legislative priorities that impact the Down syndrome community. NDSS partnered with other national Down syndrome organizations, including their Advocacy Partners, the National Down Syndrome Congress and the Global Down Syndrome Foundation.

During the optional pre-conference learning sessions, attendees were briefed about policy topics that affect the Down syndrome community. On the first full day of the conference, attendees took part in advocacy training, learned more about legislative priorities and heard from guest speakers.

This year’s legislative priorities included advocating to eliminate subminimum wage, increased funding for NIH research, encouraging members to join the Congressional Task Force on Down Syndrome, in cluding individuals with Down syndrome in Alzheimer’s initiatives, and The Charlotte Woodward Organ Transplant Discrimination Prevention Act, which was re-introduced.

On day two of the conference the Charlotte Woodward Organ Transplant Discrimination Prevention Act (H.R. 2706 and S.1183) was re-introduced into both chambers of Congress. This bill, named after NDSS Education Program Associate Charlotte Woodward, would prevent discrimination based solely on disability in the organ transplantation process and provides additional legal recourse to people with Down syndrome and other disabilities should they experience discrimination.

Sens. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) sponsored this bill again and re-introduced it in the Senate and Reps. Kat Cammack (R-Fla.) and Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) introduced it in the House. Woodward herself was able to watch the re-introduction inside the Capitol.
While on Capitol Hill this week, advocates from across the country advocated for Woodward’s bill and encouraged their Members of Congress to sign on to co-sponsor the legislation.

The event culminated with hundreds of meetings with Members of Congress and their staff on Capitol Hill.