

NATIONAL HEALTH EQUITY | GRAND ROUNDS

Andrea Dalzell, RN

Disability Rights Advocate

Panelist, Breaking Down the Ivory Tower: Building the Health Care Workforce America Needs



Andrea Dalzell, RN, is a highly active healthcare advocate, disability rights influencer, and most importantly, a strong survivor. Dalzell was born and raised in the heart of the hustle and bustle of Brooklyn, New York. At the early age of five years old, Dalzell was diagnosed with transverse myelitis, an inflammation of the spinal cord that causes pain, muscle weakness and paralysis, and was using a wheelchair full-time by age 12. Although this diagnosis was very critical, Dalzell let absolutely nothing get in the way of being all that she could be.

While diligently trying to secure a position in a hospital, Dalzell worked as the health director, case manager, and an in-school nurse to make ends meet. However, she continued to interview in pursuit of her goal of becoming a Registered Nurse. After 76 interviews, Dalzell was finally given the opportunity to prove herself and was hired as the first Registered Nurse in a wheelchair in New York state.

Dalzell has been ultimately respected most for her influence and healthcare advocacy for the rights of those with disabilities throughout her journey. As an advocate and activist, she's has been recognized in the spotlight over the years including being named New Mobility's Person of the Year (2021), Craig H. Neilsen Visionary Prize Winner, an ambassadorship with Urbane Scrubs, and features in United Spinal Association's blog, *HomeCare Magazine*, Apple's iWatch campaign, *The Mighty/Yahoo*, *Forbes*, and *Nurse Blake*.