Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies

Increase for Community Providers Serving Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Providers require resources and flexibility to run their agencies and programs effectively and efficiently.

It is incumbent upon State government to consider the full financial context in which the community provider operates in order to prevent crisis and interruption of services, enable leaders to focus on mission and outcomes, and invest the immediate and future health of the organization.

For years we have borne witness to the nationwide acute shortages in direct care workers. Direct Support Professionals (DSP) work directly with I/DD to enable them to lead a self-directed life and are accurately referred to as the “backbone of the support system.” ABCD believes that one of the most urgent issues facing community providers is the employment and retention of the direct support professional workforce. It is therefore imperative that the DSP wage truly reflect the responsibilities they hold. But there were negative consequences to this narrow strategy not the least of which was the response of supervisors and managers, the “glue of the support system,” who were demoting themselves to be DSPs due to the shrinking pay differential and opportunity to collect overtime. It is for these reasons we were very grateful to the Governor’s commitment in FY’21 to new funding to ensure DSPs are paid above the state’s increasing minimum wage and to raise wages of managers and other senior members of the DD frontline workforce. We respectfully request that this continue in the FY’22 Budget as the minimum wage is raised in January of the fiscal year.¹

But there are consequences of this targeted focus:

- Professional staff, administrators, custodians and other support staff are demanding pay increases like their colleagues and threatening resignation. If left unchecked, the potential drain of our talent pool through employee attrition and underutilization would have negative long-term consequences on our agencies and their provision of services.

- 2008 dollars paying for overhead and operational costs in 2020 has taken a great toll on our organizations’ immediate and future financial health.

The State must consider an annual rate increase for community providers’ which will cover all costs.

¹ $42 million (State share).

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