Person-centered thinking has transformed New Jersey's system of care. In less than a decade, tremendous progress has occurred to enable people to move out of institutional placements into the community.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities transformative system is a work in progress - broad and complex with many goals and provisions. Six years in, we are able to assess not only successes but areas of improvement.

In addition to the need for average absence factor of 5% to be factored into all day program rates, a unique rate must be crafted for the provision of day services for those who have high rates of absenteeism and require nursing services due to the level and complexity of their issues. Persistent absenteeism is often due to chronic health or psychiatric conditions, fatigue or side effects from medication or simply waiting for weeks to get a wheelchair repaired – the disability is the reason preventing constant participation.¹ Because providers are only paid when people are in attendance, agencies which disproportionately serve individuals who are chronically absent are seriously under-resourced. In order to participate to the full extent that they are able in day programs, this segment of our population requires a specific day program rate.²

New Jersey must take the important next step to reasonably accommodate certain segments of the developmental disability population so that they too may continue to live in or return to the community.

February 25, 2021

¹ ABCD providers who serve this population report an average absenteeism rate of 15% and cost of nursing care to be 5% of their costs.
² According to the Ombudsman for IDD and their Families 2019 report, 800 individuals are medically fragile/complex or 6% of the 12,793 people who participate in Day Habilitation. 15% increase (to cover absenteeism and nursing care) to their rate would amount to $1.8 million (State share)