



**Alliance for the Betterment of  
Citizens with Disabilities**

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**Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies**

A Proposed Next Step Toward Ending Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Ending abuse, neglect, and exploitation of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and responding effectively and with dignity when it occurs, are our ethical obligations and central to our public policy.

The recent annual report of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families stated its focus on issues brought on a weekly – sometimes daily – basis. One of those, indeed the first, was abuse and neglect. Though the Ombudsman was unable to tell us how prevalent abuse and neglect is or why it happens, we believe an immediate response to this most urgent of issues is required.

We all know that people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) are at greater risk and experience higher rates of abuse, neglect, and exploitation than the public. Which is why the safety of the individual is the number one priority for the State and many friends, family, formal and informal caregivers who wisely operate under the assumption that abuse, neglect, and exploitation will not disappear and who, as a result, remain forever vigilant. Though the Department of Human Services has an entire department, the Office of Program Integrity and Accountability (OPIA), dedicated to prevention, investigation, and response, which has been independent of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) since 2003/2004 and the DSP Competency and Capacity Building Steering Committee created by the Murphy Administration and the NJ Legislature stated goal is to create a competency-based career pathway for DSPs, perhaps more resources would prove valuable in our efforts to eliminate abuse, neglect, and exploitation of individuals with IDD.

It is for this reason, we propose the formation of a Standing Advisory Roundtable on Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with IDD comprised of stakeholders, thought leaders and experts to advise the Assistant Commissioner of DDD on:

- Preventative efforts that address the root causes of abuse, neglect and exploitation including the many norms, attitudes and practices behind inequities which shape the lives of those with IDD
- Practices that are accessible and support survivors' efforts to heal
- Accountability strategies for the people responsible that are effective, equitable and restorative

It is imperative that the specific parameters of the group be adeptly conceived and maintained.

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