



Pennsylvania Advocates and Resources
for Autism and Intellectual Disabilities



November 15, 2023

The Honorable Josh Shapiro
Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Room 225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Shapiro:

On January 26 of this year, we wrote to you regarding the tremendous strain on families and providers in delivering the essential care and services for our intellectual disability and autism (ID/A) community. At that time, we requested \$430 million state dollars to address critical needs for a system that had reached its breaking point. This amount was determined entirely by the lack of inflation within our current rates, and further compounded by the fact that ID/A services are funded through a single-payer system with fees that remain in effect for up to three years. The accumulated inflation data and personal stories of those underserved by the current community system, which we know you have heard firsthand, indicate that the situation has only worsened.

As our original request was based on inflation, previous underinvestment, and intended to address static rates expected to remain in effect until January 2025, our previous request of \$430 million state general fund dollars remains valid. Documented accumulated inflation and current data on our Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce now available supports this amount as the minimum investment needed to address the critical conditions affecting Pennsylvania's ID/A community. For these reasons we again urgently request your inclusion of \$430 million into the Pennsylvania budget.

In June the Pennsylvania General Assembly through HB 611 reduced the proposed Intellectual Disability - Community Waiver Programs line item by \$170 million for the current fiscal year. These funds could have been redirected to increase rates by \$370 million when matched by the applicable Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) available to Pennsylvania Medicaid programs. DSP compensation remains entirely inadequate in the current labor market leaving every eligible Pennsylvanian at risk of losing critical services, leaving many to be cared for by aging parents and family members. In the few months since we last wrote to you the PA Waiting List for intellectual disabilities has drastically increased from 12,400 to 13,103 people, an increase we have not seen historically over any similar period.

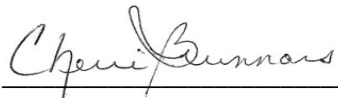
An analysis of current rates was essential, and we are grateful to you for ordering an immediate review on September 8. To complement this review, we jointly engaged a 2023 workforce study to determine

the current state of the Pennsylvania ID/A workforce that was published on October 6. Despite all efforts by service providers to adapt their workforces creatively and responsibly to the changing economic conditions, DSP vacancies (23%) and annual turnover (33%) remain at historically high levels. Earlier this year state workers were granted a new contract that will guarantee them 22.1% in wage increases over the next four years. DSP-equivalent positions at the state are already reimbursed at higher wage and benefit levels. Pay equity with state workers is a reasonable expectation of private employers supporting the entire community ID/A system across the Commonwealth. As we have previously noted low wages and the economic impact of DSP underinvestment disproportionately affect female and minority workers serving the ID/A community.

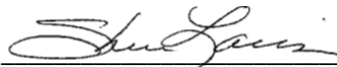
We respectfully request the inclusion of \$430 million state dollars to fund ID/A fee schedule rate increases in the forthcoming fiscal year 2024-25 Executive Budget. Without a competitively compensated workforce service capacity will continue to diminish. From the recently experienced claw back of \$170 million resulting from insufficient rates, a significant portion of the funding needed for this critical investment may already be available in the current fiscal year. After conducting the current review of fee schedule rates, we further request that updated fee schedule rates be adopted immediately, retroactive to July 1, 2023.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your response. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss should you have any questions or need any further information at this time.

Sincerely,



Cherie Brummans
Executive Director
The Alliance CSP



Sherri Landis
Executive Director
The Arc of Pennsylvania



Diane Conway
CEO
MAX Association



Mark Davis
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PAR



Patrick DeMico
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Richard S. Edley, Ph.D.
President and CEO
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cc: Dana Fritz, Chief of Staff
Lindsey Mauldin, Deputy Chief of Staff
The Honorable Uri Monson, Secretary of the Budget
The Honorable Akbar Hossain, Secretary of Policy and Planning
The Honorable Valerie Arkoosh, Secretary, Department of Human Services
Kristin Ahrens, Deputy Secretary, Office of Developmental Programs