



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Applauds \$45 Million Increase in Direct Care Wages

SENATOR JACOBS March 13, 2017

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, HEALTH CARE**

(Albany, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs announced today that the Senate One House budget will include an increase of \$45 million annually to compensate direct care professionals (DSPs) for the critical support, assistance and care they provide to individuals with disabilities. The proposal addresses a lack of funding in the Governor’s Budget to help appropriately adjust salaries at not-for-profits that employ workers who provide state services for individuals with autism, serious brain injury, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and other developmental disabilities.

“This commitment of funding will go a long way towards ensuring that these very skilled and compassionate caregivers will continue to be in place and providing essential services and support to our most vulnerable citizens,” said Jacobs. “I am a very strong supporter of the direct care professionals wage increase and I am very pleased that this initiative is part of our Senate budget proposal.”

Currently, many direct service professionals earn an average of \$10-\$13 per hour – just above the state’s minimum wage. Last year, the state implemented minimum wage increases that did not provide funding to account for the “compression factor” - the need to increase the salaries for more experienced DSPs and supervisors in order to maintain the current salary gap with minimum wage workers. Without new funding provided to the DSP employers

providing services on behalf of the state, the salary gap would compound the existing high turnover rate among those providing these critical services, and lead to significantly increased vacancies as qualified individuals seek less strenuous minimum wage work.

“Ensuring that these professionals who provide the most basic and critical care are appropriately compensated better reflects New York State’s priorities, while also reducing gaps in care and high turnover rates,” said Jacobs. “I am very hopeful this same level of funding will survive in the final budget,” the Senator concluded.