



**Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities**

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**Joint Legislative Budget Hearing Testimony
New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities
State Fiscal Year 2021 Executive Budget Proposal
February 3, 2020**

Good morning Chairs Krueger, Weinstein, Carlucci, Gunther and other distinguished members of the Legislature. My name is Ted Kastner, Commissioner of the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about Governor Cuomo's Fiscal Year 2021 Executive Budget and how it will benefit the more than 140,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities served by OPWDD.

It has been just over a year since I assumed leadership of OPWDD and would like to begin my testimony by highlighting some accomplishments of the past year.

In regard to our work with our partners:

In 2019, we received federal approval to provide Crisis Services for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (CSIDD). This Medicaid State Plan amendment allows us to double our service capacity with the same investment of state dollars. We will use these funds to complete our statewide network of Crisis Response Services.

We are collaborating with the Office of Mental Health to create new programs to support individuals with severe challenging behaviors. These include a new inpatient unit in Brooklyn and a new Extended Treatment Unit in Queens. We are exploring avenues to enhance the skills of primary care and behavioral health providers.

Complimenting these efforts, we are working diligently to improve collaboration with our partners in county government. We have regular meetings with the Counties and exploring opportunities to coordinate state and county resources to improve crisis response outcomes.

We have achieved our goal of ensuring that all OPWDD-eligible individuals have a Life Plan developed by our CCOs. We are now working to ensure that these Life Plans meet the standard of being conflict-free and person-centered.

In August 2018, OPWDD published the Draft Specialized I/DD Plans-Provider Led (SIPs-PL) Qualification Document for public comment. We anticipate releasing a revised draft for public comment soon.

Internal activities in 2019 have helped lay the foundation for a more effective system of supports in the future:

We have restructured our Leadership Team and are working to improve public engagement through our Advisory Committees.

OPWDD conducted a thorough review of the organizational structure and the functions of approximately 20,000 employees to ensure that resources are deployed to best meet the needs of people we support.

We created a new division of Data Management and Strategy to enable better informed decision-making and to promote data transparency. This will support IT development and data analytics. We are midway through the implementation of an electronic health records system for all state-operated services. We have secured a five-year renewal of our federal Medicaid waiver, allowing us to provide supports to more than 90,000 people in their own home or community.

Finally, OPWDD strengthened Central Office oversight of policy, budgeting and program operations and has now begun to reorganize the Regional Office structure to streamline operations. As a result of these improvements, all individuals and families have the same access to supports and services no matter where they live, what language they speak, their race, religion, or when they became New Yorkers.

The Governor's Executive Budget continues to build upon these successes, including significant new investments, now leveraging approximately \$9 billion in state and federal funding for OPWDD services and programs. These included:

- \$120 million in annual all-shares funding to provide new and expanded services for people entering the OPWDD system for the first time;
- \$15 million in capital funding to expand housing opportunities; and,
- \$170 million in new state and federal resources to comply with the State's minimum wage, increased wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), and support for clinical staff employed by OPWDD's network of non-profit providers. These additional human capital investments bring the total commitment to increase wages and compensation in our nonprofit provider workforce since 2015 to \$650 million.

New York leads the nation in the amount of funding to support people with developmental disabilities, providing nearly twice the national per capita average. As we move into 2020 and beyond, OPWDD will continue to transform the service delivery system to one that is more accessible, equitable, and sustainable.

New York's evolution to a more responsive and flexible service system would not be possible without our collaborations with the legislature, input of the people that we support and their family members, and our dedicated partners in the provider community. Thank you for your partnership. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.