



Finger Lakes **Independence** Center

Opening Doors to Independence

July 3, 2025

NYS Senate Standing Committee on Health
NYS Senate Standing Committee on Investigations and Government Operations
Senate Hearing Room
250 Broadway, 19th Floor, New York, NY, 10007

Re: Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP)

To Whom it May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony for the Joint Public Hearing regarding the CDPAP transition to a single statewide fiscal intermediary (FI) under contract with Public Partnerships LLC (PPL). My name is Andrea Champlin, I am the Statewide Systems Advocate at the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) located in Ithaca, NY. FLIC is an Independent Living Center (ILC) that served as a fiscal intermediary for CDPAP until the transition to a single statewide FI. At that time, FLIC was brought on as a facilitator organization to assist consumers with the transition process.

Staff & Training

FLIC agreed to become a CDPAP facilitator to ensure that our consumers had local and high-quality assistance to complete the transition to PPL. Tompkins County includes many rural areas that receive poor and inconsistent cell phone reception. Many consumers also have limited access or confidence using the technology required in the transition, such as a smartphone or tablet. FLIC shifted the job responsibilities of at least four staff members and hired one brand new staff member to assist consumers with the process within the transition timeframe. FLIC staff met with many consumers at our local and accessible office location or completed home visits with consumers to help them with the transition.

PPL hosted a series of training sessions and "Office Hours" for facilitators to familiarize them with the transition process and PPL systems. In some instances, only the FLIC Executive Director would receive information about the dates and times of the sessions. At other times, PPL would provide this information to all facilitator staff. During training sessions, staff would ask PPL staff questions that were simply ignored. Attempts to ask these questions via email after the training sessions were also largely unanswered, including questions posed by the FLIC Executive Director. PPL demonstrated an inability to consistently and effectively communicate information even to their own facilitators. As a result, staff were unable to provide accurate and timely information to consumers about the transition.

Prior to the end of the initial transition window, PPL discontinued the training sessions and/or "Office Hours," without seeking input from the facilitators.

Initial Transition



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By January 14, 2025, FLIC staff submitted a list to PPL with the names of 172 consumers and their associated Managed Care Organizations (MCO) that had been utilizing FLIC as an FI, as requested by PPL. PPL then requested an additional list that also included the names of the Personal Care Aides (PCA) that were in our system. FLIC staff submitted this additional list including the 216 PCA to PPL by January 21, 2025. Despite this, PPL continued to communicate in training sessions and meetings that “no one” had submitted the lists as requested and credited all onboarding issues to this.

Though FLIC submitted complete lists of both consumers and aides to PPL, facilitators were not able to reliably access consumer profiles. On numerous occasions, FLIC staff would set up appointments with consumers to complete their initial onboarding process. FLIC staff would then be unable to locate the consumer’s profile on the PPL system, making it impossible for staff to successfully transition the consumer.

FLIC staff reached out to PPL directly about this on January 31, 2025: “I am still noticing some glitches with seeing consumers in PPL at home - sometimes when I reload the list, there are eight pages of consumers and I see the names I thought were missing, and other times, there are five pages with the same consumers consistently missing. My coworker on a different computer has had the same issue.” This same FLIC staff member attended the next “Office Hours” session. She described the situation to PPL staff there and was still not provided with any explanation or assistance. This problem was still occurring in the PPL system when staff checked on June 26, 2025.

In addition to issues with consumers disappearing from the system, some consumers were changed to different PPL Facilitators without the consumer’s knowledge or consent. FLIC staff noticed that five consumers that successfully completed the initial onboarding with FLIC, and had been previously receiving other services from FLIC, were inexplicably transferred to two different PPL Facilitators. This resulted in confusion and frustration from consumers, who were then contacted by the unknown facilitators. It also resulted in FLIC being unable to update the consumers of their progress and status with PPL, since they had been removed from the FLIC list.

Lack of Translated Documents

At FLIC, we have a community of PCAs and consumers that primarily speak Russian. Despite multiple attempts to obtain documents in Russian, FLIC, the consumers, and PCAs have yet to receive any documents in their spoken language.

Ongoing Issues

As the transition period continued, PPL made additional changes to their systems and forms. Many of these changes were not communicated to facilitator staff. One FLIC facilitator recounted completing the transition process for both a consumer and PCA. On Thursday, when FLIC staff checked the system, they were able to see that all forms were successfully approved and communicated that to the consumer and aide. However, the very next day, the consumer and PCA were no longer approved. FLIC staff had no insight into why this had occurred. Eventually, the FLIC staffer was able to find where PPL had added an “Offer Letter” to the system without informing facilitators, consumers, or PCAs of the additional form.



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Unfortunately, this was not the only time that PPL altered forms without communicating with facilitators, staff, or consumers. Initially, PPL required PCAs to complete an extensive demographic survey. Later, PPL changed the survey and reduced it to five questions. Again, this change was not communicated effectively. As a result, many cases that had previously been completed and approved were suddenly back in limbo.

Payment Issues

Despite successfully transitioning nearly all consumers and their associated PCAs (all but 7 of FLIC's 218 consumers successfully were transitioned), FLIC receives phone calls each week from PCAs that have not been paid accurately. PCAs often first try to reach PPL directly and are unsuccessful, so they turn to FLIC to help them. Though FLIC staff do the best they can to determine any issues and help PCAs and consumers to address them, we are often left with only option for them: Try to contact PPL.

Many PCAs that FLIC worked with chose to receive paper paychecks that they could pick up easily from our local office and cash or deposit as they wish. Since the transition to PPL, PCAs are unable to cash their paper paychecks locally due to the issuing bank being from North Carolina. This is yet another example of how PPL has made process more difficult for PCAs.

Consumer Authorizations

In addition to consumers and PCAs submitting paperwork to PPL, PPL also needed to receive service authorizations from MCOs or local Departments of Social Services. Without service authorization, PCAs were unable to clock in to work. FLIC was contacted by consumers who found that PPL did not process her authorization, despite having access to it.

On April 2, 2025, a Designated Representative (DR) contacted FLIC's Executive Director to ask for her assistance. The DR's daughter had been utilizing FLIC as an FI prior to the transition and FLIC staff assisted her through the transition process. The DR was able to determine that there was "no record found" of a Service Authorization for her daughter. FLIC assisted the DR and learned that the service authorization had indeed been sent to PPL from the Tompkins County Department of Social Services; PPL had simply failed to add it to their own system.

This was not an isolated incident. Other FLIC consumers reported the same thing. One consumer was able to share screen shots demonstrating that Tompkins County Department of Social Services had submitted the service authorization to PPL, and PPL failed to process it and add it to the consumer's profile. Though this may seem like a small issue, it has real consequences for consumers and PCAs. As the same DR wrote: "One of my staff can simply not go without being paid as she is the single support for 4 children and is already behind in her bills."

Lack of Communication

One of the most common complaints FLIC has heard from consumers and PCAs alike about PPL is the difficulty they have had communicating with them. The previously mentioned DR wrote: "I call when they open at 8am and leave call back information and my number. The entire day goes by with no call back and I have done this 3 days now. I also wrote emails which get an automated response they were received, and again no return email." Another wrote to us about



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an issue they had first tried to address with PPL directly, saying "I have not had any luck getting PPL on the phone to address this" and "We've requested callbacks from PPL multiple times, but no one has called us back in the last week." This issue has also extended to facilitation staff. Since January, FLIC staff have sent over a hundred emails to PPL requesting clarification or assistance with the transition. Often, PPL staff would take days to respond. When they responded, they would often say that they were also unsure of the answer and would have to consult other PPL staff about the issue. This contributed to even more delays in the transition process.

PPL has begun sending text messages to consumers and PCAs. However, many consumers that we work with at FLIC do not have cell phones and are unable to receive these communications. Furthermore, if a consumer uses a DR, their DR does not receive the text messages – just the consumer does. It is unacceptable to not provide an effective means of communication between FI, DR, consumer, and PCA.

Standard Operating Procedures

It is clear that PPL was not prepared for the CDPAP transition. In early June, FLIC facilitator staff received, for the very first time, documents from PPL that outline their Standard Operating Procedures. It begs the question of how consumers and PCAs are expected to complete the transition process when PPL itself is only just becoming clear on their own processes and communicating that information out.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide public comments regarding the CDPAP transition to a single FI. I appreciate the diligence of the Standing Committee on Health and Standing Committee on Investigations and Government Operations for looking into the transition through a public hearing.

Sincerely,

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