

Angela Harmer

I want to begin with my thanks to the Senators Rivera and Skoufis for holding this hearing on the CDPAP because we need to save it now and bring back choice. My name is Angela Harmer and I reside in Troy, NY. I am a 50 years old woman who is mobility impaired and I utilize a power wheelchair. I have been a part of CDPA since 2002 when I moved out on my own. In my case there are a lot of services I do not qualify for because of only being mobility impaired/physically disabled. CDPA is the program that works for me as a consumer. The way it was ...made for disabled people by disabled people. I was the CEO of my own care until 2024 when Governor Hochul decided to do a backyard deal to have Public Partnership, LLC become the sole fiscal intermediary for all of New York State. They are not in any way shape or form an FI. I will tell you what an FI is and should be : The Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley has known me even before I began using CDPA, from middle to high school to now. They have been there as a support, help with emergencies in many cases, held classes, support group sessions, and included everyone in events and activities. Their philosophy is freedom, independence and choice. While they have been my FI for CDPA I could always call and ask questions, get paperwork, if any problem came up with the call in system they would just input the information or handle anything else I may have needed concerning CDPA. There was always someone there to reach out to. This is not so at all with PPL! PPL does not make it easy for facilitators to do anything to assist or to give us the correct information or even make it easy to talk with them (ILCHV) freely like me as a consumer used to. PPL and the Dept of Health just do not allow it.

CDPAP has enabled me to be as independent as I possibly can, be self sufficient and able to make the choices I want to make. I have been on the front lines of this fight against this awful transition to one FI. I am a proud member of the Caring Majority, CDPAANYS, and have worked with many organizations fighting this cluster f--k of a transition. CDPA has allowed me to be able to do that. I have been employed at times, can have a social life, and as my friends always tell me I try to be everywhere I can and try to do everything I possibly can and I thrive in my own apartment. All of this has worked and has been fine until what NYS calls as now our one FI: PPL. You can not get anyone on the phone and if you do they are not knowledgeable. They are reading off a computer screen and there is nothing personable about it. They do not know or care to know each and everyone of us. Some of the ways we are instructed to do things like using technology doesn't work for me. The apartment building where I live is not WIFI friendly. Anyone that has technology pays for it which for me is quite expensive. I have always done CDPA through my landline phone with a code and used paper timesheets to submit weekly. If PPL expects this of me then they should pay for it for me. The whole PPL system is a mess and just not feasible. In most cases given the fraud abuse, lack of help, financial trouble, personnel changes, lawsuits, and systems not functioning, etc., most companies would be shut down, put out of business and probably have legal ramifications. So why shouldn't PPL have the same consequences, repercussions, as any other company that is doing a less than adequate job and we as part of CDPA must have to settle with this!!!

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I am one consumer of tens of thousands throughout New York State using CDPA. I have cried and cried, lost sleep over this, yelled, screamed, worried myself sick, been out there with every form of media, talked to all politicians I can find. I have been at the Capitol, everyone there knows who I am as I fight everyday to keep my life and for the thousands who can not make their voices heard. This is something as a human being of which I am first, before the disability I should not have to stress so much over and worry about every moment of everyday. Without good care, everything else in my life I would not be able to do. It is a human right and should be considered important and treated as such. We know as a disabled community there needs to be changes and improvements, better pay for PCA(s) to care for us, but very few people are interested in doing the job when they have to deal with PPL. PPL is not the solution or the answer. They are the problem! Nursing homes are not the answer either. I do not want to bury anymore of my friends or end up sick myself, hospitalized, or have to go to a nursing home. I absolutely refuse to. Please Governor Hochul, the Department of Health, Director of Medicaid, and all the Politicians of the state of New York do the right thing. Please bring back CDPA the way it was meant to be. It should be our choice first! Bring us - the disabled community to the table and we can help find the answers. Meanwhile, with the Independent Living Centers across the state's philosophies bring them back as Fiscal Intermediaries so we have choice again and support again!!! PPL must go.....Please have a heart!!!!