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Testimony on CDPAP Budget Hearing

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My name is Mbacke Thiam. I am the Housing & Health Community Organizer at the Center for the Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY). We are a disability rights nonprofit organization founded in 1978. We are part of the Independent Living Centers movement, a national network of grassroots and community-based organizations that enhance opportunities for people with disabilities to direct their own lives. CIDNY advocates for people with disabilities who live in any of the five boroughs of New York City. We hereby testify on the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) Budget Hearing.

CDPAP: a Vital Program

The CDPAP is an essential program for seniors and people with disabilities or chronic diseases. It enables people to live independently and safely without relying on institutional nursing homes. It enables them to receive the care they need at home from people they trust.

While drafting this testimony, I couldn't stop thinking about one of our consumers who recently passed away. She stated at our Lobby Day in Albany that:

“If I had one wish to change something in my life, it would be to have the ability to take care of myself without having to depend on others to help me with my daily routine. Due to my developmental disability, which is cerebral palsy, having someone support me daily is my reality. It can be very frustrating at times, and I wanted to throw in the towel, but I chose to live my life to the best of my ability. I am the person that I am today because of the best quality of support that I have received over the years with CDPAP. I have an active and fulfilling life. I have a competitive job that I want to keep.”

Horrible Implementation of Single Fiscal Intermediary

The rough implementation of the Single Fiscal Intermediary is detrimental to people with disabilities. People did not have access to representatives from Public Partnership LLC (PPL) to answer their questions and receive support in filling out the application forms.

This shows that people are dying because it is complicated for them to find the care they need daily. Consumers are unable to keep their home care workers. Also, the

tardiness of payment has caused a large number of personal assistants to quit their jobs or expend their savings or even accumulate debts to survive. In addition to that, PAs did not have a insurance while switching to PPL for three months. That means, if something happens to their family or themselves, they will have to pay their medical bills out of pocket.

Restoration of the CDPAP for Individualized Choice and Support

CDPAP was built on the principle of self-direction. Consumers deserve the right to choose a Fiscal Intermediary that understands their unique needs, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and regional/local context. Switching to a single FI strips people of the choice of care and imposes a one-size-fits-all program. That is why we recommend going back to the previous system, and we strongly support ([A8355/S7954](#)). This bill will relate to licensure requirements for fiscal intermediaries under the CDPAP.

We thank you for providing us with the opportunity to testify. This testimony is supported by Dr. Sharon McLennon Wier, Executive Director of CIDNY.

Best regards,

Mbacke