

August 21, 2025

**Senator Gustavo Rivera**

Chair, Senate Standing Committee On Health

**Senator James Skoufis**

Chair, Senate Standing Committee On Investigations and Government Operations

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New York, NY 10007

**Contact:** Ms. Lequela Steen, MPH Email: [steen@nysenate.gov](mailto:steen@nysenate.gov)

**Re: August 21st, 2025 NYS Public Hearing to Examine the Consumer-Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) transition to a single statewide fiscal intermediary**

Good Morning. My name is Evan Yankey and I am Advocacy Director for Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled, one of 41 Independent Living Centers in New York State. We advocate for the right of disabled people to live, travel and work in the community—central to the mission of the independent living movement.

BCID has advocated in support of the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program, or CDPAP, since it began as an experiment in giving disabled New Yorkers the power to control their own care in the late 1970s. We are not a service provider for CDPAP or a fiscal intermediary, but we do support people with disabilities to leave institutions and live in the community. In New York, CDPAP has been the program that makes the freedom to live in the community possible for so many of us, including several people on our staff.

I have worked in the disability field in New York for 18 years, and to see someone leave a nursing home because CDPAP is available, to see someone in a rural area be able to hire their neighbors for care, to see the many nonprofits run by people with disabilities be able to help people pay staff of their choice, has felt like a ray of hope in a long fight across generations of advocacy.

With the transition of CDPAP to a single statewide fiscal intermediary, that hope has been snatched away. What did the transition look like for us? It was a flood: of

calls, emails, texts, and pleas for help descending on our office. We are not an FI, but people come to Independent Living Centers for help living in the community, for help staying out of nursing homes.

A year ago, before the transition, if we had been beset with a flood of calls from people worried about losing their care, staff going unpaid, shifts being unfilled, then we would have called for help from fiscal intermediaries who cared, who had open lines of communication, who were known by consumers and who knew the consumers they served.

But during the transition, the new fiscal intermediary, PPL, was, and still is, a black hole. People could not get in touch with them, and when they did the information was uniformly unhelpful. One of our staff who uses CDPAP was directed by PPL to an in-person office, and when she arrived and found it closed, she was redirected to an office in a distant borough. When she finally made it there they tried to poach her staff for a non-CDPAP homecare agency. As the transition entered its start date our staff and the many, many consumers who contacted our office experienced roadblocks to registering, an inability to log hours, staff who went unpaid, and devastating losses of care.

Living in the community is not a selfish act; for years New York state has worked alongside people with disabilities and others to keep people out of nursing homes, institutions, shelters, and hospitals because it benefits us all. Today, the state claims it will save money through their changes to CDPAP, but what will they say when nursing home costs and populations rise, when people who have lost staff fill up emergency rooms?

If you think the opposition to PPL is located solely amongst disability interest groups, you are wrong. The impacts of people losing options for care in the community will hurt us all. Whole generations of New Yorkers are seeing parents age, family members risking loss of independence, and fewer and fewer options for care.

A year ago, we would tell people: you can stay in the community, you can get help from a nonprofit committed to independence, an agency who will get to know you and will let you get to know them. Today, New York state is telling people in need that they or their loved ones are going to be under the administration of a for-profit, private-equity funded corporation, min-maxing their profit margins against whatever neglect they can get away with.

This debacle won't be solved by PPL or health department promises to tweak the system or "do better," especially since PPL claims it's doing just fine. The way to fix this is to start where CDPAP began, with Independent Living Centers and other trusted not-for-profits serving our community.

By ending PPL's contract, New York state can make a statement that the government and its not-for-profit partners care for the people of New York, and that the social welfare of New York's citizens will not be left in the hands of corporations.

As generations change and age, as families find it harder to care for loved ones, as rents and costs for care rise, what will New York say is our future? Will we tell New Yorkers they are on their own? Will we force people to quit jobs to care for their loved ones? Will the people who can't find care be sent to overcrowded institutions? Or we return to a system of people working together with nonprofits in their communities to keep people in their own homes.

It is our hope that this hearing today will be the beginning of a path forward that works for everyone.