

Hello, my name is Krystelle Diaz, a PA in NYC currently navigating the PPL transition. Here is my testimony for the hearing for CDPAP. If you have any questions regarding my testimony, please feel free to reach out to me. Here is the requested contact information, as well as my written testimony. Thank you very much in advance.

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Testimony:

Hello, my name is Krystelle Diaz. I have been a PA in CDPAP for over a decade. I feel great pride in my job, helping people live with dignity and independently in their homes is very rewarding.

However, it has been very difficult to maintain morale during this confusing time of transition. I have been cautiously optimistic about this transition to PPL, and while I understand the concerns surrounding fraud in CDPAP, I feel that the lack of transparency and communication during this process has led to great confusion and an ultimate failure in the success of the transition overall.

I have been very fortunate to be able to field the numerous hurdles myself, my coworkers, and my consumer have endured since the April 1st transition. But we are now currently dealing with an entirely new problem that everyone we have spoken to at PPL seems ill-equipped to resolve. As of June 1st, for reasons that PPL cannot seem to answer, my consumer's authorized weekly time was cut by more than half. They claim that it is in connection with the authorization that they received from my consumer's insurance. However, in speaking with the insurance we have been told that they have sent the correct authorization with the correct number of hours no less than four separate times. My coworkers and myself are now on our third week of missing pay due to this authorization error. PPL has asked us for the last 3 weeks to wait a varied number of days for them to fix it, only for nothing to be fixed and for every representative we speak with to give us conflicting answers every time, and for some of them to not even understand the issue we're having. This is a situation that is not tenable for very long, our consumer needs their hours to receive the care they deserve, and we as PAs need and deserve the pay that we work so hard for.

This is aside from the numerous issues we encounter using the Time4Care Mobile App that they insist we use to record time. They have zero technical support on hand for app issues, and seem to rely on the fact that most people use smartphones on a daily basis. What they seem to fail to realize is that some of the people who work these positions may not be technologically savvy, and may not know how to troubleshoot issues on the app. And with no department to reach out to for such issues, many are presumably left in the dark about what to do. The app generates false shifts, duplicates time, and even leaves people logged in for 24 hours despite having clocked out at the proper time, creating discrepancies for whoever may be currently clocked in, resulting in errors. I've received numerous documented technical errors when attempting to use the app, and no one in the customer service department seems to know what they are and how to navigate them. We even had an instance where a customer service representative told us to seemingly commit fraud (ie: clock in on a different day we weren't scheduled to work and just let the clock run until the end of the shift) so that the time would appear on the site. Currently, myself and my coworkers have several hours of logged time that has not been paid out and is listed as pending until this issue is resolved. But with the lack of assistance and communication by customer service at PPL, we've been in an endless loop of phone calls and waiting.

Consumers shouldn't have to fight for the time that they are rightfully owed, and PAs shouldn't have to live with such financial uncertainty knowing that they are coming in every day despite these issues to make sure that their consumer gets the care that they need. We're in a grim situation where consumers who require round the clock care to live, like my consumer, may very well not survive without their trusted PAs to care for them. It forces PAs into the dire position of having to weigh moral obligation to the people they care for against the ability to provide the basic necessities for themselves and their families. I have spoken with many other people dealing with numerous issues during this transition, and while our issues may differ, the sentiment does not. This is a failed transition that lacked proper communication with the people that it would affect the most. Most consumers had no idea a transition was even coming until January, leaving them scrambling to understand what it meant for them and their care. If there truly is such widespread fraud in CDPAP, I believe that the answer is not forcing all FIs under one umbrella. I believe the answer lies in proper vetting of these organizations, and allowing the organizations that have abided by the rules to continue with reasonable oversight. CDPAP has always been about choice for the individual, the choice in who cares for them, and the choice in how they are cared for. I think it is only right that the disabled community of New York have their choice in where they seek their home care restored, they don't deserve to live in uncertainty and fear that their quality of life may be compromised irreversibly.

Thank you very much for listening.

Best Regards,

Krystelle Diaz