

My name is Sophie-Anais Renois. I live in Valley Stream, NY.

I have been a Personal Assistant (i.e., PA) in the Consumer-Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) for the past 15 months.

I care for my 85-year-old grandmother on the weekends. She is eligible for 56 hours per week. Another relative works full-time caring for her during the week. I work part-time on the weekends. CDPAP has enabled my grandmother to continue residing in her home with dignity. She is empowered, protected, cared for, and loved. My grandmother has no cognitive deficits; however, she is legally blind, so she needs assistance with ADLs (*i.e., activities of daily living*) to ensure she is safe. I'm not only a granddaughter and a caretaker, but I'm a speech-language pathologist (SLP) by trade. There's a reason why CDPAP is New York State's most popular home care program, not because of "fraud" and "abuse" as Governor Hochul claims, but because disabled and/or elderly patients can continue residing in their homes while receiving care from a trusted caregiver, family member, or friend. As an SLP, I know not all nursing homes are created equal, and I have witnessed abuse of elderly residents and the disabled.

The Governor's switch to PPL has failed me because I wasn't getting paid on time. I had to humbly ask my church for assistance in paying for groceries and medical bills. Without that, I wouldn't have been able to take care of myself during the first few weeks of the PPL transition from fiscal intermediaries (i.e., FI). I haven't been able to use the flex-card for downstate residents, and I can't access the portal through Leading Edge (*which PPL uses to operate the flexcard*). I have reached out to PPL and haven't received assistance to resolve this. They say to call, but when you call, you are endlessly on hold, or they hang up. When you leave a message, they don't call you back. Furthermore, I have experienced wage theft. When looking at my pay stubs, I have been underpaid for the hours I have worked. It will say the hours I worked and the hours I was paid for.

No one is getting rich off of being a CDPAP PA; we are paid ~19/hr. Currently, unfortunately, due to this economy, I'm not working full-time as an SLP. PPL has offered (*with no opt-out option*) a health "insurance" plan that essentially covers nothing. It only covers very basic preventative care by their own approved providers. So people cannot maintain their trusted physicians. I'm turning 26 later this month, but in NYS we have the 29 law; I could remain on my parent's insurance if I weren't being offered (i.e., forced) into taking this healthcare "plan". However, the 29 law is only for adult single children who are ineligible for employee-sponsored health insurance. I have complex medical needs, and I don't know what I'm going to do after this month.

I am one of tens of thousands facing these issues. I call upon the Governor and the NY State legislature to stop this catastrophe before more harm is caused! Too many people have lost their PAs! I can only imagine what would have happened to my grandmother if she wasn't receiving care from me and another relative. She would have likely ended up in the hospital or a nursing home. Worse, she could have died, as some patients have and more will continue to die. Especially after the devastating legislation that was passed in Washington. Save CDPAP NOW! End the PPL monopoly and restore choice to this critical home care program! Lives are at risk! The disabled and elderly can't wait!

Best regards,

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