

**RANKING MINORITY MEMBER**  
LIBRARIES  
RACING, GAMING AND WAGERING  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
STATE-NATIVE AMERICAN RELATIONS  
WOMEN'S ISSUES

**COMMITTEE MEMBER**  
AGRICULTURE  
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTS  
VETERANS, HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
MILITARY AFFAIRS

**NEW YORK**  
**STATE**  
**SENATE**



**SENATOR DAPHNE JORDAN**  
43<sup>RD</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

**ALBANY OFFICE**  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ROOM 706  
ALBANY, NY 12247  
(518) 455-2381

**DISTRICT OFFICE**  
1580 COLUMBIA TURNPIKE  
BLDG. 2, STE. 1  
CASTLETON-ON-HUDSON, NY 12033  
(518) 371-2751

**EMAIL:** JORDAN@NYSENATE.GOV  
**WEBSITE:** JORDAN.NYSENATE.GOV

February 10, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NYS Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
President Pro Tempore and New York State Senate Majority Leader  
Room 330, State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Governor Hochul and Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins:

For years, the not-for-profit community organizations that provide services to citizens of New York with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) have been reporting that the funding New York State provides to them through the Medicaid rate is insufficient.

We believe it has become a crisis and that increasing the funding to these organizations that have dedicated their existence to providing a safe, wholesome, and nurturing environment to the people and families they serve must be a state budgetary priority.

Several factors are causing this crisis:

- **Insufficient funding for salaries has resulted in vacancy rates for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) positions as high as 40%;**
- **Remaining staff are working tremendous amounts of overtime, management is filling in as caregivers, and living arrangements changes are being considered to increase the number of residents in any location to spread remaining staff as far as possible;**
- **Those receiving services are not as easily able to attend activities provided by the agencies, are less able to integrate into their communities, and are less likely to obtain and maintain employment because of the lack of staffing; and**
- **Many more people remain on waiting lists for services.**

The salary of an entry-level DSP is \$29,000 at the ARC of Rensselaer County. Yet, the responsibilities of this essential position are much greater than the salary reflects. DSPs help people with disabilities with all their daily tasks such as bathing, dressing, meal planning, and preparation, taking medication, and engaging in meaningful activities. Yet, DSPs can make a higher salary at McDonald's or Amazon. They can also make \$10,000 more per year working for OPWDD doing the exact same job!

**We believe that New York State has a responsibility to help end this crisis by increasing the Medicaid rate such that DSPs working for community providers can be paid a higher salary and those with disabilities who depend on the services DSPs provide, can receive the services they deserve.**

Thankfully, the 2022-23 Executive Budget includes a COLA for these agencies, which is a good start. **However, we need to add funding so that the DSPs can see an increase in their wages of 20% on an ongoing basis. Additionally, we need to commit to an annual COLA that will provide for annual increases for this vital workforce.** With the State Budget in the best shape it has been in years, NOW is the time to make up for the lack of investment in I/DD services that occurred over the last 11 years.

We respectfully request that these noted investments become a budgetary priority and that this funding be reflected in the final 2022-23 State Budget. Thank you for your consideration of our request advanced on behalf of our dedicated, hard-working Direct Support Professionals who deliver essential services.

Sincerely,



Daphne Jordan  
State Senator, 43<sup>rd</sup> District



Robert Ort  
Minority Leader, 62<sup>nd</sup> District



Andrew Lanza  
State Senator, 24<sup>th</sup> District



George Borrello  
State Senator, 57<sup>th</sup> District



Peter Oberacker  
State Senator, 51<sup>st</sup> District



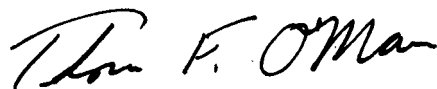
Michael Martucci  
State Senator, 42<sup>nd</sup> District



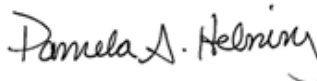
Patrick Gallivan  
State Senator, 59<sup>th</sup> District



Patty Ritchie  
State Senator, 48<sup>th</sup> District



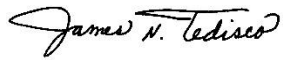
Thomas O'Mara  
State Senate, 58<sup>th</sup> District



Pamela Helming  
State Senator, 54<sup>th</sup> District



Sue Serino  
State Senator, 41<sup>st</sup> District



James Tedisco  
Senate Senator, 49<sup>th</sup> District



Anthony Palumbo  
State Senator, 1<sup>st</sup> District



Dan Stec  
State Senator, 45<sup>th</sup> District



Edward Rath  
State Senator, 61<sup>st</sup> District



Fred Akshar  
State Senator, 52<sup>nd</sup> District