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The Honorable Catherine M. Young
New York State Senate
Capitol 428
Albany, New York 12247
Attention: Ms. Jessica Jeune
Regarding Budget hearing Health/Medicaid February 16, 2017

February 10, 2017

Dear Ms. Jeune,

I am writing to address the harm to services taking place for people with disabilities and seniors who rely on [B1] Consumer Directed Personal Assistance (CDPAS). As insufficient Medicaid reimbursements lead managed care plans to cut reimbursements, we are facing lower wages, cuts in services and a workforce shortage, all of which threaten the ability of seniors and people with disabilities to stay in the community. As Governor Cuomo and the Legislature move to considering this year's budget, it is imperative that they invest in this critical service that allows people to live at home while saving the state hundreds of millions over similar services.

Long term services and supports include paid medical and personal care assistance that people need when they experience difficulties with self-care tasks as a result of aging, chronic illness, or disability. Life expectancy continues to increase, baby boomers are getting older, and community based Long Term Services and Supports allow more people with chronic illnesses and disabling conditions to live longer and independently in the community. These are the services that let our loved ones stay at home, with us. My dad has been diagnosed with the onset of Alzheimer's disease at 86 years old. He is doing well at this point but my mom and I are concerned that he may need a significant level of home-care in the future. My family would want dad to live at home with the necessary care of a reliable worker he knows rather than placing him in a nursing home. The less pay received by these invaluable workers would mean that fewer people choose this career. The shortage means that persons who could live at home with assistance would be unnecessarily institutionalized. Further, the cost efficiencies built into CDPAS means the program saves taxpayers well over \$100 million per year over other services. Long term care in the community is a win-win for the State and should be a priority as the Governor and the Legislature convene to hammer out the 2017 budget.

Pursuant to The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the US Supreme Court ruling in Olmstead v. LC, individuals with disabilities of any age have the Constitutional right to live in the "Most Integrated Setting" appropriate to their needs. Thus the vast majority of persons with disabilities and seniors have the absolute right whenever possible to live in their own homes rather than being warehoused in the sterile confines of a nursing home or other type of institution. Reducing the already low pay rates of PA's would most certainly reduce the number of persons seeking a job as a PA. This outcome would lead to more cases of individuals with disabilities being forced to live in institutions and result in unlawful segregation of individuals with disabilities and seniors with chronic illnesses. This scenario would be

tragic and deny many their Constitutional rights by violating Federal law, both Statutory (ADA) and Judicial (Olmstead). We urge lawmakers to increase the wages of PA's so that every member of our community can live and thrive in their own homes nearby family and friends. A decade ago, workers in this are made one and a half times what fast food and retail were making. Over the past five years, reimbursements have decreased and wages have stayed frozen, meaning these workers now make less than those in fast food. Shouldn't workers for people with disabilities at least make the same as those who work in fast food? The answer to this question indicates how much compassion we have or do not have for our most vulnerable citizens.

[B1]Wage parity does not apply to CDPA,



Joseph Guagliano

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