

**Testimony of Nicholas Cappoletti, CEO LIFEPlan
NYS Senate Committee on Disabilities
COVID-19 Legislative Roundtable**

My Name is Nick Cappoletti and I am providing testimony today as the CEO of LIFEPlan, one of the State's seven CCOs. LIFEPlan serves approximately 19,000 individuals in 38 counties. I am also the parent of a 30-year-old son with a developmental disability who receives supports and services from OPWDD. I am grateful to Chairperson Mannion, the Committee members and the staff for hosting this session. This past year has shown us both the strengths and the weaknesses of our current IDD system of services. Hopefully, this session will help us learn from the past and improve our capabilities to better serve this population moving forward. I would like to offer two comments.

- While the focus of this roundtable is the State's response to COVID-19 at residential facilities, we would be remiss if we did not address the impact of the pandemic and our response to the 70% of people with IDD receiving OPWDD supports and services live in the community. This includes:
 - people who live on their own
 - people who live at home with family members who may be vulnerable if something were to happen to that support,
 - people who are in "family care" homes where there is no back up care plan.

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Our State's service system needs a robust system of respite and back up emergency care that is local and responsive when we have situations like COVID or a future public health issue, natural disaster, family illness or death of a caregiver. Calls in the middle of the night will continue to occur and families need to have the peace of mind that there are resources available. We should not have to scramble when these events occur or unnecessarily send people to hospitals or homeless shelters.

- Secondly, the high infection rate and even higher death rate from COVID for this population underscores the need for specialized population health management and a better system of integrated care. While the CCOs were able to quickly use our Care Managers to survey members and report information on infection rates, hospitalizations and deaths for the population, this information was primarily based on self-reporting. There is no formal system in place to monitor the health of the population and

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ensure appropriate care. The COVID-19 crisis only further demonstrated the unique needs of this population and the requirement to have a coordinated system of specialized healthcare and services that monitors needs and provides us with the information required to respond to a future health crisis with the appropriate resources.

Thank you.