

Now is the Time to Support the Intellectual Disability & Autism Service System

- The Provider Alliance (TPA) is requesting an additional \$65 million in state General Funds that will be matched with federal Medicaid funding (\$72 million) to increase wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who serve 58,000 Pennsylvanians with Intellectual Disability/Autism (ID/A).
- The community ID/A system is at risk of collapsing after over 50 years of providing supports and services:
 - Families are providing 24/7 care for their adult children, many of whom have significant medical and/or behavioral issues.
 - Elderly parents, including those in their 70's and 80's, are physically and emotionally unable to provide care and are risking their own health and safety.
 - A growing number of family caregivers, unable to find DSPs or programs, are quitting their jobs to care for their adult children. Some are losing their homes, health care and retirement savings under the financial pressure.
 - Over 6,500 people with ID/A lost day and employment services during the pandemic.
 - Providers are closing programs, reducing capacity, and decreasing the number of community homes across the state in response to this growing crisis.
- Providers cannot find, hire, or retain sufficient numbers of DSPs needed to provide care in the current labor market. **Updated rates will increase the average wage for a community-based DSP from \$14.38 per hour, but not to the current average pay at state centers that now exceeds \$19.00 an hour. Community-based DSPs deserve equal pay for doing equal work.**
- Because of inequitable and insufficient wages, community ID/A programs report DSP annual turnover rates up to 60%. Conversely, turnover rates at state centers, which pay 30% higher wages on average, are much lower – ranging from 17% to 21%. In response to increased staffing vacancies and turnover, the Commonwealth has unilaterally increased starting wages for state employees.
- The additional \$65 million in state dollars requested by the TPA will immediately help families in crisis and ensure thousands of Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens receive the services they need. It will also put community-based DSPs on more equal footing with state workers in state facilities and reduce turnover of care providers who are essential to the ID/A system.