

# ***ID/A COALITION***

***THE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND AUTISM SERVICES COALITION OF PENNSYLVANIA***

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Dear Members of Pennsylvania's Congressional Delegation:

As members of the Intellectual Disability and Autism (ID/A) Services Coalition in Pennsylvania, we are expressing our support for the \$400 billion in funding to strengthen the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) infrastructure and workforce, which supports the state's intellectual disability (ID) and autism communities.

As Pennsylvania and the country continue to navigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the bold investment in HCBS outlined in the Build Back Better Plan and the Better Care Better Jobs Act is critical to support the ID/A community – individuals, families, and providers. The undersigned Pennsylvania organizations urge our members of Congress to support the fully proposed \$400 billion in funding to strengthen and expand the Medicaid HCBS infrastructure and workforce.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to disproportionately impact the whole ID/A community. Providers of ID/A services are struggling financially from loss of revenue from closed programs due to social distancing, high levels of staff turnover, and increased expenditures for PPE equipment. Due to Direct Support Professional (DSP) staff salaries being limited to the provider rates being set by the state, providers are unable to compete with corporate companies who are offering higher salaries and large sign-on bonuses to attract new staff. Without qualified, experienced staff to support individuals in the community, more providers across the state will be forced to end programs or close. The \$400 billion dollar investment from the Better Care, Better Jobs Act will ensure ID/A providers can hire and retain qualified DSP staff and continue to offer the essential programs to individuals in their communities.

The closure of HCBS programs has further isolated individuals with ID/A and their families from friends and their communities. As of June 30, 2021, there are 12,359 individuals with IDD in Pennsylvania on the wait list for supports and services, with 5,135 of those in an emergency situation where they need services within the next 6 months. Likewise, there are 2,541 individuals with autism in Pennsylvania on the wait list for supports and services, with 2,131 of those in an emergency situation. Moreover, the lack of support for the DSP workforce means that the responsibility of care and support often falls on unpaid family caregivers. This is especially critical as more family caregivers are aging themselves and taking care of their adult child. The workforce and earnings losses related to unpaid family caregiving are significant and well-documented. Investment in HCBS would support more individuals with ID/A in the community and strengthen our economy by providing for good jobs for DSPs and allowing family caregivers to rejoin the workforce.

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THE ID/A COALITION CONSISTS OF STATEWIDE ADVOCACY AND PROVIDER ORGANIZATIONS ADVOCATING FOR SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND AUTISM IN PENNSYLVANIA.  
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT ANY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS LISTED:

DISABILITY RIGHTS PENNSYLVANIA (800.692.7443) REHABILITATION & COMMUNITY PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION (717.364.3280)

PA ADVOCACY AND RESOURCES FOR AUTISM AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY (717.236.2374) THE ARC OF PA (717.234.2621)

This is a critical opportunity to invest in the long-term viability of Home and Community-Based Services system and ensure that individuals with ID/A can access the services they need. We urge our lawmakers and leadership to support the Better Care Better Jobs Act's \$400 billion investment in the Medicaid HCBS infrastructure and the workforce that provides these essential services.

Sincerely,

Members of the PA ID/A Coalition



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Mark Davis, President and CEO  
PAR (Pennsylvania Advocates and Resources for  
Autism and Intellectual Disabilities)



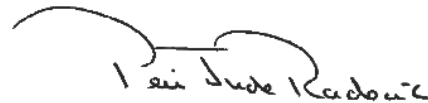
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Sherri Landis, Executive Director  
The Arc of Pennsylvania



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Richard Edley, Ph.D., President and CEO  
RCPA (Rehabilitation & Community Providers  
Association)



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Peri Jude Radecic, Esquire, CEO  
Disability Rights Pennsylvania

cc:

Senator Robert Casey

Michael Gamel-McCormick, Disability Policy Director, U.S. Senate Special Committee  
on Aging

Governor Tom Wolf

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