

**For Immediate Release  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **PA SILC & PCIL present “Our Lives, Our Services, Our Agencies, Our Choice”**

Consisting of representation from 17 statewide Centers for Independent Living (CILs), individuals with disabilities who utilize in-home care services, and legislators, the “Our Lives, Our Services, Our Agencies, Our Choice” event is set to discuss the issues surrounding major changes regarding the “Agency With Choice” aspect of in-home care, which is being rushed into implementation.

**WHAT:** On Tuesday, June 7th, “Our Lives, Our Services, Our Agencies, Our Choice” will take place in Harrisburg, PA from 11 a.m. until noon. The rally will be held at the outdoor fountain of the Capitol Building, on Commonwealth Avenue. This event will have in-person support from 17 centers for independent living (CILs), consumers of in-home care services, with PA State Representative Ryan Bizzarro, PA State Senator Nikil Saval, and PA State Senator Camera Bartolotta all listed as potential speakers, schedules permitting.

There have been plans to implement Agency With Choice (AWC), a new facet of Personal Assistance Services (PAS). This press conference/rally is being held to raise significant concerns with both the speed and the specifics of the planned implementation of Agency With Choice (AWC). With a single-vendor approach to AWC, the element of choice is essentially lost, and the single-vendor method has proven to be problematic in past ventures for attendant care recipients, caregivers, and more.

“We’re not necessarily against the idea of the Agency With Choice model of service itself,” says Shona Eakin, CEO of Voices for Independence, one of Western Pennsylvania’s largest in-home care providers for individuals with disabilities. “The Agency With Choice format essentially already exists, currently being offered by providers-- if we move to a single-vendor method for Agency With Choice, we are essentially eliminating ‘choice’ from the equation. We need to ensure that the real concerns of a single-vendor method, which has been historically harmful, are factored into the discussion and consideration. Expediting the legislation to implement Agency With Choice only brings about more concern and more room for error, which can easily lead to a disruption in services and lack of choice for individuals with disabilities.”

Pennsylvania State Representative Ryan Bizzarro echoed the same sentiments, stating, “Changes should not be made without listening thoroughly to the people it impacts - the people whose lives can be disrupted by these changes. I stand with the people calling to make sure modifications to assistance services does no harm.”

This rally is unique not only in its urgent nature and variety of speakers, both confirmed and potential, but that this issue has gained bipartisan attention throughout the state as well.

RSVP’s are not required, but if given, preferred by Monday, 6/6/2022

**WHERE:** Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex  
Outdoor Fountain on Commonwealth Ave (across from Soldier's Grove)  
531-559 Commonwealth Ave, Harrisburg, PA 17120

**WHEN:** Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m.

**CONFIRMED SPEAKERS:**

- Teri Henning, Esq., CEO, Pennsylvania Homecare Association
- Carl Berry, Executive Director, Community Resources for Independence
- Fady Sahhar, President/CEO, ProVantaCare
- Shona Eakin, CEO, Voices for Independence
- Various recipients of home and community-based services

**POTENTIAL SPEAKERS:**

- Pennsylvania State Representative Ryan Bizzarro
- Pennsylvania State Senator Nikil Saval
- Pennsylvania State Senator Camera Bartolotta

Interview opportunities will be available following the rally.

**ABOUT PA SILC:**

The PA SILC is a nonprofit, cross-disability, consumer-controlled organization dedicated to securing public policies that ensure civil rights for people with disabilities. The PA SILC was established in 1992 to comply with the federal Rehabilitation Act Amendments, which requires states to create a consumer-controlled advisory committee to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's Independent Living Program. In 1992, the federal Rehabilitation Act Amendments gave SILC co-signing authority on the federally-mandated State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).

**ABOUT PCIL:**

The PCIL is a membership association of CILs located in Pennsylvania. The PCIL's mission is to support the network of CILs and to advance the Independent Living movement.

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