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## **ID/A Care System Collapsing in Pa.**

*Number of individuals served has dropped 11% since March 2020*

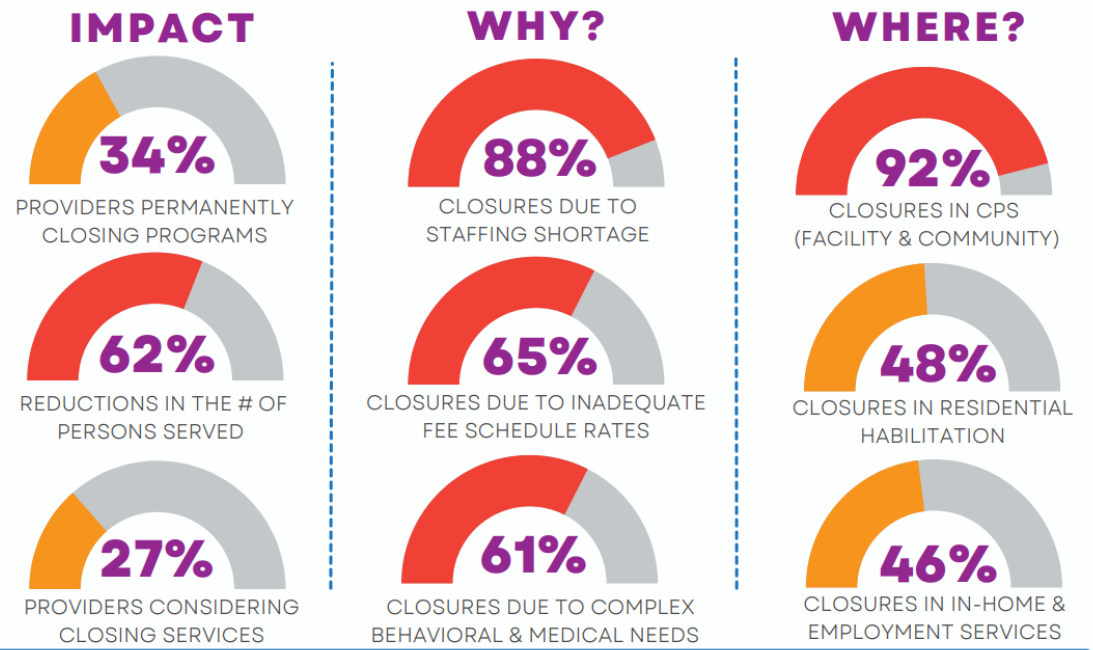
**HARRISBURG, Pa. (March 2, 2023)** --- Pennsylvania’s network of care and support for individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism (ID/A) is collapsing, with the number of people being served dropping by 4,029, or 11 percent, over the last three years, as providers downsize and shutter programs because of chronic underfunding and related staff shortages, according to a new statewide survey.

The Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA), Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability (PAR) and The Provider Alliance (TPA) surveyed over 130 providers who serve more than 30,000 individuals across the commonwealth, finding the number of individuals served dropped from 36,174 prior to March 2020 to 32,145 through February 2023.

“The data clearly demonstrate that the care and support system for people with ID/A is failing and in crisis,” said Richard Edley, Ph.D., President and CEO of RCPC. “For years, we have been saying that ID/A services were being pushed to the brink. Now, the crisis is here. We cannot kick the can down the road any longer.”

Among the key findings of the survey:

### **DOWNSIZING TRENDS REPORTED BY PROVIDERS**



Before the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic underfunding had been a consistent problem. The situation has only worsened. Today, providers bear many unreimbursed care costs because of inadequate funding, and it is having a direct impact on the care available to ID/A individuals and their families.

Providers are terminating and downsizing programs, closing facilities, and/or limiting the number of people they serve because of staffing shortages. Individuals approved for services cannot find providers with the capacity to offer the services they need and to which they are entitled.

“The data show that the current system is unsustainable --- and, in fact, collapsing in front of our eyes,” PAR President and CEO Mark Davis said. “We need to continue to make investments in the rates and reduce the administrative burden on providers to recruit more direct support professionals. In doing so, we can serve more people instead of putting the burden of care directly on families. The ID/A system is intended to be available for the individuals who need it, and right now people are falling through the cracks, as evidenced by the existing waiting list and what we now see as a hidden waiting list.”

Because human services like ID/A are funded primarily by Medicaid, providers cannot raise prices like private businesses to pay higher wages. Inadequate rate fees imposed by the state do not cover the true cost of care and exacerbate operational challenges.

“This complements the data from our recent workforce studies and unfortunately it’s not surprising,” TPA Executive Director Patrick DeMico said. “Closures and declining services are the direct result of an insufficient workforce, and these new data sets show that clearly. Organizations and people who need a direct support professional can’t hire or retain them with fees that are too low to begin with and don’t keep pace with inflation.”

In January, a separate workforce study found ID/A providers plagued by low wages, high vacancy rates and high turnover. The study also found that 41 percent of survey respondents are engaged in a more costly practice of contract staffing for services because of the workforce shortage, cutting into operational funding for services. Fourteen percent of all direct support professional hours are paid at the overtime rate.

Both surveys mirror other studies that have shown providers facing major staffing shortages, reducing caseloads, or cutting programs because of workforce issues, and trying to manage unprecedented vacancy and turnover rates, largely the result of inadequate state reimbursements that keep wages low.

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**About the Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA):**

With well over 350 members, the majority of who serve over one million Pennsylvanians annually, Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA) is among the largest and most diverse state health and human services trade associations in the nation. RCPA provider members offer mental health, substance use disorder, intellectual and developmental disabilities, children’s, brain injury, medical rehabilitation, and physical disabilities and aging services, across all settings and levels of care. Visit [www.paproviders.org](http://www.paproviders.org) for more information.

**About Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability (PAR):** PAR proudly represents provider organizations whose mission is to serve and support Pennsylvania’s children and adults with autism or intellectual disability. With a workforce of over 50,000 Pennsylvanians supporting tens of thousands of individuals and their families, the association promotes the highest standards of service through advocacy, information, training and education, and the resources provided by our members. Visit [www.PAR.org](http://www.PAR.org).

**About The Provider Alliance:** TPA supports agencies that serve people with intellectual disability and autism across Pennsylvania. We do this through collaboration, advocacy, innovation and information-sharing across its membership. TPA promotes best practices and workforce development to help members deliver safe, supportive, and compassionate services that are part of the fabric of local communities. More at <https://www.provideralliance.org>.

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