



Pennsylvania Advocates and Resources  
for Autism and Intellectual Disabilities



June 12, 2023

Leaders of the General Assembly,

For years, individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism (ID/A), their families, and providers of their supports and services have been warning of a system collapse, fearful that the services that they depend on will no longer be available. These services keep individuals healthy and safe, create opportunities for them, engage them with their communities, and help them find their purpose. Access to these services allow families to maintain their own jobs, promote independence of their loved ones, and in some cases, provide respite from providing direct care.

The collapse is here. Individuals have seen their services decrease or disappear due to the lack of staffing. Providers are unable to hire and retain enough staff to provide existing services and are forced to consolidate and shrink programs to the available staff they have. Due to rates that do not offer competitive wages for direct support professionals, 24% of positions remain unfilled and 37% of staff turn over each year, often citing wages as the primary reason why they leave.

Statewide associations have been united in advocating for an increase of \$430 million in state funds to the home and community-based waiver rates to offset the impact of actual inflation not included in these rates. This was in addition to the budget proposed by the Governor in March of this year. This \$430 million in state funding would be matched by an additional \$470 in federal funding to the State.

HB 611 decreased the Governor's proposal from March by \$170 million for the Community Waiver line item, a decrease that represents the growing loss of services within our system. This decrease was a result of underutilization, due to the lack of staffing, as individuals struggled to find providers available to support them in their communities. Further, given the lack of available staff to provide these services, this demonstrates that the current rates do not provide a competitive wage for direct support professionals. If we want to ensure that these services remain available for all individuals, we must increase the rates to a level that would provide competitive wages and bring more direct support professionals into the workforce.

We fear that without an increase to the rates there will be no relief for the current waiting list (12,000 individuals) and the thousands of individuals on the hidden waiting list who have approved waivers but no staff to offer those services and supports.

\$170 million dollars for increased rates represents a significant portion of the \$430 million that is needed and comes directly from an appropriation amount that our government is acknowledging will not be spent due to low reimbursement rates that are resulting in decreased services. Reinvesting these anticipated cash surpluses into rates will help providers recruit and retain current staff, with the goal of taking more individuals off the emergency and hidden waiting lists.



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The associations here respectfully ask for your consideration to restore the \$170 million that was in the March proposed Governor’s budget. This will be a great first step to reinvesting in this workforce and will be an effort to support more individuals who need services, and not just accept the status quo.

Sincerely,

**Cherie Brummans**  
Executive Director, The Alliance CSP

**Sherri Landis**  
Executive Director, The Arc of Pennsylvania

**Diane Conway**  
CEO, MAX Association

**Mark Davis**  
President & CEO, PAR

**Patrick DeMico**  
Executive Director, The Provider Alliance

**Richard S. Edley, Ph.D.**  
President and CEO, RCPA