



YOU NEED TO KNOW ME
I am a Direct Support Professional



A Real and Immediate Workforce Crisis Threatens Life in the Community for Individuals with Disabilities of All Ages

The Shared Goal – Life in the Community for People with Disabilities. . .

was reaffirmed and promised by the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision, the New Freedom Initiative, Congress, the ADA, and U.S. Governors. People with disabilities, families and providers all agree – the United States must adopt a long-term support system that gives all people the opportunity to live and work in their own community.

Direct Support Professionals are the Lynchpin to Community Living. . .

assisting people with disabilities. Direct Support Professionals, often referred to as personal assistants or home care aides, maintain trusted relationships with millions of people with disabilities they assist each day. They enable people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live in their own communities by assisting them with their daily affairs and intimate needs: medications, meals, dressing, mobility, vocational training, respite care and other intimate in-home services.

Medicaid is the Primary Source of Funding for Supports and Services to Low-Income People with Significant Disabilities of All Ages.

Providers Are Held to Fixed Medicaid Reimbursement Rates and Cannot Pass Cost Increases onto Their "Customer"

Low Wages Contribute to Workforce Crisis

- Direct support professional hourly wages increased only \$1.55 from 1996 to 2006, versus an increase of \$2.92 for public direct support positions during the same period;
- The average hourly wage for a direct support professional is \$9.85, compared to the average hourly wage for DSPs employed by a state government of \$15.48;
- Reports show that vacancy rates for direct support professionals increased from 5.8% in 2004 to 6.7% in 2006; 75% of direct support positions turn over each year;
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the demand for this workforce to increase more than 41% between 2004 and 2014, despite the worsening economy.

All of This Threatens the Quality of Supports to People with Disabilities. . .

and undermines the ability of people to live in their own homes and communities. Without a reliable labor pool the lives of millions of Americans who rely on long-term services and supports are at risk. This critical shortage of a stable workforce threatens the quality of supports to people with disabilities.

Federal Action is Needed to Permanently Address the Workforce Crisis! Support H.R. 868

Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA) and Congressman Lee Terry (R-NE) have recently introduced H.R. 868, a bill that takes an important step forward by joining federal, state and private sectors together to address the workforce crisis. The legislation encourages investing resources now so that people with disabilities can choose to live in their own homes and communities – a choice that ultimately saves money while reflecting the nation's shared goal.

H.R. 868 would amend Title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide funds to states to enable them to increase the wages paid to targeted direct support professionals (DSPs) who are providing services to individuals with disabilities under certain Medicaid programs.

The bill creates a **financial incentive** to help states address this workforce shortage.

States must develop a five-year plan—in conjunction with people with disabilities, providers, and DSPs—to **achieve equity between the wages of private and public direct support professionals**.

States that elect to submit a plan would receive **temporary, targeted additional federal funding** to reimburse providers for increased wages and wage-related costs for specific direct support professionals.

In addition, the H.R. 868:

- Creates a **state option** to address this workforce crisis. There is no federal mandate for state participation.
- Provides **enhanced federal medical assistance (FMAP)** to help states achieve their five-year plan.
- Provides **\$3 million** to help states develop their wage enhancement five-year plans.
- Requires **annual indexing** to assure that states maintain wage equity beyond the five-year period. The indexing is equal to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' employment cost index (ECI).
- Assures **collaboration** among all stakeholders to ensure that people with disabilities, direct support professionals, and providers have a voice in addressing recruitment and retention issues.

Direct Support Professionals in your community are counting on your help.

In the 110th Congress, more than 130 Members co-sponsored this same legislation.
Please Contact Congresswoman Capps or Congressman Terry about co-sponsoring H.R. 868!