



October 24, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) we ask you to support the inclusion in any end-of-year legislative package policies to strengthen the provision of Medicaid-funded long-term services and supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Without additional Congressional action, the ever-worsening direct support workforce crisis¹ will continue to grow until the entire long-term care infrastructure collapses. Congress must bolster these programs that millions of Americans depend on every day.

ANCOR is a national, nonprofit trade association representing nearly 2,000 private community providers of services to people with I/DD, funded almost exclusively through the Medicaid program. ANCOR's providers support over one million individuals with disabilities.

People with I/DD often rely on long-term services and supports to live independently within their homes and communities. But a longstanding workforce crisis puts people with disabilities at risk of losing access to these critical home and community-based services (HCBS). Reduced availability of services jeopardizes the safety and well-being of the people supported by them. Individuals with significant or complex support needs are often without options or forced to travel long distances outside of their communities to find providers, heightening their risk of institutionalization or hospitalization.

The workforce crisis predates the COVID-19 pandemic, stemming from decades of underinvestment in the program and stagnant reimbursement rates that leave providers unable to offer wages that are competitive with those of hourly-wage industries, such as fast food, retail, and convenience stores. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the existing crisis to levels that threaten the very infrastructure of HCBS.

For the third year in a row, ANCOR surveyed its community-based provider organizations to measure the impact the workforce crisis has had on their ability to provide services. *Data from the State of America's Direct Support Workforce Crisis 2022*² indicates:

¹ Michelle Diament, Disability Scoop, [Disability Service Provider Crisis Worsening, Survey Finds](#) (Oct. 21, 2022).

² American Network of Community Options and Resources, [The State of America's Direct Support Workforce Crisis 2022](#) (Oct. 2022).

- **83%** of providers are turning away new referrals due to insufficient staffing—a 25.8% increase since the beginning of the pandemic.
- **63%** of providers have been forced to discontinue programs and services—a staggering 85.3% increase since the beginning of the pandemic.
- **55%** of providers are considering additional service discontinuations if the current high turnover and vacancy rates persist, with only 8% indicating they would not.
- **92%** of providers indicated that they had experienced difficulties in achieving quality standards due to insufficient staffing, representing a 33.3% increase since the beginning of the pandemic and a 13.6% increase in the last year alone.
- **71%** of case managers are struggling to connect families with services due to lack of available providers.
- **66%** of providers are concerned that vacancy and turnover rates will increase with the end of the public health emergency.

We are grateful for Congress’s support for HCBS as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. However, with the conclusion of one-time federal pandemic relief funding, community providers face a fiscal cliff that puts access to community-based services in jeopardy.

We urge you to bolster supports for individuals with I/DD by strengthening the direct support workforce. We ask for your support for the inclusion in any end-of-year package:

- An investment in Medicaid HCBS, including an enhanced federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for states.
- Creation of a grant program for the retention, recruitment, and training of the direct support workforce.
- A recommendation to the Office of Management and Budget to create a standard occupational classification for direct support professionals, which will create a mechanism for collecting consistent national data on the direct support workforce and help in stabilizing wages³ for direct support professionals.

Congress has the potential to take the necessary steps to begin to stabilize the direct support workforce and in turn, deliver on the access and inclusion promises of the Americans with Disabilities Act by ensuring the Medicaid HCBS program remains sustainable. We ask that you use this end-of-year legislative package to strengthen our communities and support individuals with disabilities.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or want additional information, please contact Elise Aguilar, eaquilar@ancor.org, Director of Federal Relations.

Sincerely,



Shannon McCracken
Vice President of Government Relations.

³ See Health Management Associates, [Review of States’ Approaches to Establishing Wage Assumptions for Direct Support Professionals When Setting I/DD Provider Rates](#) (July 2022). The report found that of the states surveyed, the vast majority relied on federal data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to establish wage assumptions, and that without a classification for direct support professionals, states’ wage assumptions varied widely.