



The Workforce Crisis...how did we get here....

This article was shared by The Arc of New York, providing valuable data to use in "SUPPORT OUR SERVICES" advocacy efforts.

For decades, New York state has not invested enough to sustain essential supports and services for New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The nonprofit agencies that provide these supports are funded almost entirely by Medicaid, and more than 70 percent of their costs go directly to wages for staff who provide direct care.

Without adequate funding, I/DD providers are unable to offer competitive wages to recruit and retain the skilled direct support staff that provide the foundation of care for more than 140,000 New Yorkers with I/DD.

The existing workforce crisis escalated dramatically in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Without immediate action, this emergency will continue to force service reductions, program closures and loss of care to people with I/DD throughout the state..

According to a recent survey conducted by NY Disability Advocates:

- ⇒ 93% of providers saw a decrease in job applicants this year
- ⇒ Statewide vacancy rates increased 75% since pre-pandemic levels
- ⇒ 25% of all DSP positions are currently vacant statewide
- ⇒ 48% of providers were forced to close or reduce programs due to lack of staff
- ⇒ 39% of providers were forced to close or reduce programs due to lack of staff
- ⇒ Senior & administrative staff at 69% of providers were pulled from leadership responsibilities to cover direct care shifts.

DSPs are the backbone of services for New Yorkers with I/DD. Their 24-hour support includes:

- ◇ Supporting activities of daily living
- ◇ Administering medication
- ◇ Tube feeding, wound care, mobility support and oxygen administration
- ◇ Delivering physical and behavioral health services
- ◇ Teaching money management
- ◇ Transporting to appointments and community activities

DSP staff shortages directly impact people with I/DD and put this vital system of supports in jeopardy.



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For being the rock to us all, we thank you.

FY 2023 Budget Call Letter Released

Recently the Division of the Budget (DOB) released its annual Budget Call Letter to officially kick off the Budget process for the upcoming fiscal year. The Call Letter is a document that is sent to State Agency commissioners each year instructing them to submit their budget requests for funding to DOB and at what level. Over the past decade the Call Letter has called for agencies to submit budget requests that are below the prior year funding amount by one to five percent (last year's call letter called for a 5 percent reduction in agency budget requests). This year, the Call Letter calls for funding

consistent with the prior year or in other words a flat budget with no reductions. Additionally, the Call Letter states that DOB will "evaluate specific investments and initiatives that respond to critical needs" meaning that there is an opportunity for agency investments above prior year funding amounts. This favorable Call Letter is attributed largely to Federal funding that has been delivered to states via the various Federal funding packages that have arisen during the pandemic with further potential investment possible via the spending bill that is currently being debated in the Senate. The FY 2023 Call Letter is for the budget that runs from April 2022 through March 2023.

Board of Directors Update

We held our Annual Board of Directors meeting in November and recognized the retirement of a long time advocate, volunteer and board member **Della Shiell**.

Della has been a passionate advocate with us for over 20 years, starting with her son Bob and expanded to his peers and all who CWI serves. She demonstrated strength and focus while looking out for people in need and for the staff who support them. She is a straight shooter and a great role model. We were fortunate to have had her in our corner all of these years. The celebration was timely as Della turned 90 years young that week!!

In addition, the 2022 slate of officers were elected. We thank **Dr. Harriet Busch** for her term as Board Chair and appreciate her staying on in a different role. The Board officers will be: **Angela Petrone**, Chair, **Dr. Harriet Busch**, Vice Chair, **Kurt Moser**, Treasurer and **Andy Collins**, Secretary. The remaining board members include: *Stacie Grimes, Lisa Hayes, Julie Leonelli, Holly Klingenberg, Steve Trevlakis and Brian Stidd.*

We welcome **Precious Lea Matson** who was appointed as Board Advisor.

Our Everyday Heroes

We are delighted to celebrate with you the employees who are/have reached milestones in 2021 in their careers with us at CWI.

40 years: Janice Norman Janice lives in Glens Falls and works at our Helping Hands/ Quaker Day Habilitation site as a Direct Support Professional II. Her supervisor, *Deb Keane* shares: *Janice consistently meets challenges with a positive outlook. She is a planner by nature and I believe this has been one of her greatest strengths. The flexibility and calm manner she demonstrates and models for others is drawn from her experiences and her knowledge that one must have many versions of a plan to ensure ALL people have their best possible day! This is a fantastic skill that I am confident she shares with all new staff she mentors.*

Janice's advice: Be patient. Be patient with the people you are supporting, be patient with your co-workers and be patient with yourself. Particularly over the past couple of years and the new challenges during the pandemic...be patient.



30 years: Steve LaPoint is a Special Projects Accountant and works out of the Pearl Street, Glens Falls site. He shares that he used to be a full time musician but had a young family and needed something more stable. CWI seemed to be the perfect fit.

His supervisor, Lisa Cruz shares that Steve has been great to work with. He takes pride in his work while he is able to enjoy a good joke or laugh with his co-workers even if it's at his expense. He is quick to notice if someone is having a bad day and always offers a kind word. Working together for over 30 years allows us to reminisce about the good old days.

Steve's advice: Strive not to be a success but rather to be of value (Albert Einstein)

Our Everyday Heroes, Cont.

25 years:

Robin Harrison, Schroon River Day Hab., **Kelly Miller**, Emerald Ridge IRA, **Julie Prendeville**, Community Services Manager



20 years: **Kasey Collins**, Pathways Day Hab., **George Drum**, Cleaner, **Wendy Hadley**, Park Club Day Hab., **Patricia "Jean" Porter**, Transit,

15 years: **Scott Bethel**, Facilities, **Hallie Hallahan**, Pearl Street IRA, **Dianna Potter**, Day Services, **Lisa Smith**, Everts/New Beginnings Day Hab.

10 years: **Brad Baker**, Ryan Ave. IRA, **Sarah Coon**, Park/Glenwood Day Hab., **Brooklyn Generous**, Everts Day Hab., **Orion Harrison**, Community Services, **Cathy Persutti**, Community Services, **Chris Watson**, Employment Services

5 years: **Denise Baldwin**, Pearl St. IRA, **Caitlin Bell**, Health Services, **Kerry Brush**, Health Services, **Jarred Butler**, Emerald Ridge IRA, **Raymond Coulman**, Emerald Ridge IRA, **Cortina Greene**, Ryan Ave., IRA, **Rochelle Harrison**, Cherry Street, IRA, **Jeanne Jenkins**, Health Services, **Autumn Malone**, Clinical Services, **Lisa McDonald**, Men of Moreau, **Kelly Meehan**, Community Services, **Sara Morehouse**, Community Pre-Vocational Services, **Alyssa Moynihan**, Quaker Road Day Hab., **Edward Parker**, Everts Day Hab., **Lori Robillard**, Accounting, **Patrick Round**, Community Services, **Emmeline Sleezer**, Faxon IRA

3 years: **Mary Bancroft**, Residential Services, **Roberta Breath**, Community Services, **Kari Brown-LaGoy**, Life Unlimited Day Hab., **Bridgette Crowley**, Pathways Day Hab., **Ashley Davis**, Day Services, **Khrysta Fiorino**, Community Habilitation, **Jacquelyn Fischer**, Employment Services, **Avery Frawley**, Community Helpers Day Services, **Noel Granger**, Day Services, **Beth Haines**, Transit, **Erica Hayes**, Bay Road IRA, **Ashlee Hitchcock**, Residential Relief, **Marissa Keast**, Residential Relief, **Barbara Kesler**, Community Services, **Mandy Lane**, Community Services, **Michael Lubrich**, Transit, **Elizabeth Mackey**, Community Services, **Betty McKittrick-Scoville**, Faxon IRA, **Victoria Minick**, Clinical Services, **Andrew Paolano**, Generations Day Services, **Charles Pastor III**, Fuller Road IRA, **Tessa Pemrick**, Community Services, **Tara Sandford-Briggs**, Health Services, **Oksana Shakow**, Men of Moreau IRA, **Tina Watson**, Men of Moreau IRA, **Shane White**, Men of Moreau IRA, **Suzann Wilbur**, Schroon River Day Hab.

The **Retiree Club** has again expanded **Betsy Frye Bromley**, Pearl Street IRA Manager is enjoying life as a new Grandmother!

Hallie Hallihan Residential DSP is retiring after 15 years with our team!

Going Above & Beyond



Our team continues to hold strong and to demonstrate what a hero is every day from the thoughtful little things to the game changer acts of selflessness. Michelle Swinton, Residential Manager at Flat Rock IRA recently shared that their team of 5 (out of 11 actual positions, yes we are recruiting for those vacant 6 positions) were faced with yet another blow when one of the staff scheduled for weekend coverage was not able to fulfill their shifts. This unplanned absence has a huge impact on the six women who live at Flat Rock and the other staff scheduled to work. These "core five" heard about this and banded together, reaching out to Michelle offering to help out in any way possible. They filled the void by extending their shifts, picking up extra hours, going to their co-workers home to let their dog out so that she could fill more hours on shift. This IS what heroes do!!!!!!

Brad Baker, Ryan Ave. IRA Direct Support Professional was the recipient of the Hits959 / Glens Falls Hospital Healthcare Hero Award. We are proud that others recognize this and are grateful to whomever (it was anonymous) made the effort to nominate him. Well Deserved!

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP

At the Federal Level:

Call your Senators, Call your Representative and ask them to support the **Better Care Better Jobs Act!**

This is critical! This legislation will provide funding to the states to support the wages our employees deserve! Make sure you ask that Congress NOT REDUCE the \$00 Billion allocated for Home and Community Based services.

Also—Ask your Senators and Representatives to support “**Recognizing the Role of the Direct Support Professionals Act**” (sponsored by Hassan (D-NH) and Collins (R-Me)). This legislation will create a separate Occupational Code for Direct Support Professionals so data and other vital information can be collected to recognize the unique demands of this profession.

At the State Level:

Send a clear message to the Governor and your legislators about the critical importance of funding for our workforce and our programs!

1) Stop the cuts—no more funding cuts to services for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Also, the proposal to eliminate the vacancy adjustment for residential providers MUST be rescinded.

2) Fund a living wage—we need more funding so we can pay our employees the wages they deserve!

A) Remind the Governor and your legislators that these are not minimum wage jobs—our DSPs have a variety of skills and they have people's lives in their hands.

B) Also, tell them that there must be a gap between the salaries for our field and minimum wage jobs—All minimum wage jobs. Now, in upstate NY the minimum wage for fast food workers is \$2.50/hour higher than for our positions. This is a disgraceful devaluing of the people we support and the DSPs who support them.

3) Invest in the future—the field has not been supported with investments over the past 10 years—Once we get funding to pay our DSPs a living wage, we need regular investments of 2% or more to ensure we don't return to this current crisis situation of under-funded at risk agencies.

Your support and participation in our efforts to make our voices heard is needed. Please call the Governor's office to share our message and help us secure funding of our workforce.

OF NOTE: The Adirondack Not for Profit Business Council had a facilitated conversation (by Deb Rowell) to introduce the new Assemblyman, Matt Simpson to the not for profit providers in his region. This zoom meeting was followed up by an in person visit with the Assemblyman and CWI Senior Team members to reinforce the above points.

Fundraising

For doing your job with excellence and persistence, we thank you.

Fund Development Committee is working on a number of "events" including:

Kiwanis Duck Race— our teams have sold over \$3,020 in Duck Tickets (100% of tickets sold by CWI is awarded to CWI). Thank you especially to the Transit crew who sold approximately 150 tickets and to Kyle Welcome's parents, Dave and Charlene Welcome, who sold 175 tickets. Thanks as well to the Everts-based individuals and their staff who sold tickets in front of JAB and Josh Dickinson from Adirondack Fulfillment who sold 45 tickets.

>Brooks BBQ - Friday, NOVEMBER 12, 2021 was a great success, we sold out All 325 dinners netting us \$2226!

>Annual Appeal in conjunction with Annual Giving Tuesday—targeted to begin this month November 30, 2021

>South Glens Falls Marathon Dance—targeted for March 2022

>[Dancing With the Adirondack Stars-March 26, 2022](#)

Grants/Donations

Annually we have an opportunity to apply for a small grant from the Southern Washington County Home for Aged Women. They support residents of Washington County who have special needs and could benefit from their foundation. This year, we are pleased to report we were granted \$3,800 to secure some awning/shade system for Emerald Ridge's back deck. This will afford the residents an enhanced space to enjoy their back yard.

Property Closures

Update on the sale of the **Big Bay IRA** House. We have a buyer and are working through the mortgage process with them, inspections are being completed, We are in discussion with our OPWDD liaisons on approvable uses for the proceeds of this property.



Wish List

We appreciate the ongoing donations to our "Wish List" including items to support activities with many of our individuals to help them participate in a hobby they enjoy.

Below is our updated wish list. If you can help by supplying any of the items below, please call Noel Granger, Division Director of Day Services at 518 793-4700, ext. 12114 or email at ngranger@cwinc.org and we can pick up from you or arrange for you to drop them off. (We can also let you know in case the item has already been purchased.) Thank you in advance for your support during this critical year! Those we serve are so excited to be resuming their usual activities.

- ◆ Foam peg board, pieces are light and cost about \$15 for the set. **REQUEST 3 sets**
- Sorting bears can be used with cups provided or on paper, foam, or with Velcro to corresponding rulers etc. They cost about \$20 for the set. **REQUEST 3 sets**
- Foam pieces are for us to make additional boards, etc. as well as to make a game of dominoes. The set shown is thick and costs about \$20. **REQUEST 2 sets**
- A laminator. We use it for many things including schedules and communication boards throughout the buildings. Desktop ones are \$40 and up. We would like to get one and a few packets of the laminating film (\$26)
- Dining canopies (a total of 8) for some of our sites to provide outdoor shade.
- Skip Bo cards
- 2 Roku Players
- Assorted craft supplies: glue sticks, poster board, colored markers, crayons, colored paper, glitter
- Hand held vacuum
- Corn hole set
- Basketballs and basketball pump
- Gift cards to Dunkin Donuts or Stewarts
- Gift cards to Joann Fabric or Hobby Lobby for craft supplies

For all the times you have not received a thank you, we thank you.





THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF COVID-19 REGULATIONS

On Friday, November 19th, CWI received notification from OPWDD that on November 4, 2021, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued an emergency regulation entitled "CMS Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination Interim Final Rule" (CMS rule) which requires certain employers who are certified under the Medicare and Medicaid programs to issue a policy requiring all employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19 within 60 days of the publication of the regulation in the Federal Register, which occurred on November 5, 2021.

We immediately:

- * reached out to OPWDD for guidance on how to interpret/apply this rule and to advocate for reasonable exceptions—we were able to limit the impact based on this—at least for now
- * solicited information to identify which programs would be impacted and which staff in those programs were currently unvaccinated
- * drafted the required policy
- * developed & implemented a communication plan for those impacted

The emergency regulation is aimed at ensuring safety and protection from COVID-19 for anyone seeking care is the utmost priority. Given the rapidly evolving public health emergency, the increasing presence of the COVID-19 Delta variant, and the current instability within the health care system, CMS finds good cause to issue an emergency regulation as an Interim Final Rule allowing the agency to take immediate action to protect the health and safety of residents, clients, patients, and staff. Stakeholders will still have an opportunity to comment on the regulation.

The CMS rule applies to covered staff at specific health care facilities that are certified Medicare and Medicaid providers. In the OPWDD service system this would include: **Article 16 Clinics** to the extent the facility is enrolled in Medicare under 42 CFR 485.725.

The CMS rule **does not apply** to the following facilities and services in the OPWDD service HCBS Facilities or services, such as Residential Habilitation, Family Care, Day Habilitation, Community Habilitation, Supported Employment, and other HCBS programs, unless the facility is co-located with either an Article 16 clinic or the two entities share communal space or employees. Satellite Clinics are at CWI day hab sites where service recipients receive OT, PT & Counseling)

Several of our day hab sites, have satellite clinics that are co-located within them and share communal space.

For Phase 1, within 30 days after the regulation is published, staff at all health care facilities included within the regulation must have received, at a minimum, the first dose of a primary series or a single dose COVID-19 vaccine prior to staff providing any care, treatment, or other services for the facility and/or its patients. For Phase 2, within 60 days after the regulation is published, staff at all health care provider and supplier types included in the regulation must complete the primary vaccination series (except for those who have been granted exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccine or those staff for whom COVID-19 vaccination must be temporarily delayed, as recommended by CDC).

There is no "test-out" option for covered employees under the CMS rule. Staff who have previously had COVID or who have COVID antibodies are not exempt from this rule.

Who is exempt: those that have received a reasonable accommodation under applicable federal standards (e.g., ADA or Title VII).

Examples of acceptable forms of proof of vaccination include:

CDC COVID-19 vaccination record card (or a legible photo of the card).

Documentation of vaccination from a health care provider or electronic health record.

State immunization information system record.

Breaking news - 12/2/21 we have been notified that a federal judge has halted this - for now!

COVID-19 REGULATIONS, CONT.

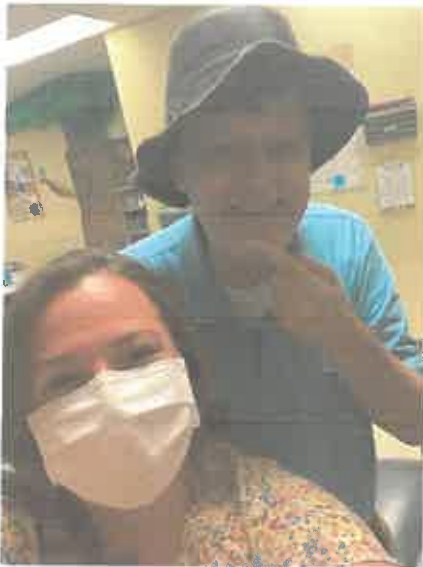
CWI and the provider organizations that we work with have provided feedback and advocacy on this topic. As of the date this is printed, NYS has not amended the requirements.

The OSHA driven rules regarding vaccination requirements for employers of over 100 are looming on the horizon. We anticipate this type of mandate to occur again and again.

Our staff are important to CWI and the services we provide. Please reach out as to how can we assist you with locating a vaccine clinic to be able to maintain employment.



For spending time supporting the dreams, visions, goals and ambitions of others, we thank you.



Recruiting New Staff

Our HR Department continues to offer New Employee Orientation twice a month to help onboard new hires quickly. Job Openings are posted internally, on our website, on Indeed and other platforms. Your word of mouth is very effective. Please share our job opportunities with people interested in a meaningful career.

NOTE: CWI employees continue to be eligible for the Referral Bonus where the referring employee will receive a \$250 taxable bonus per each qualifying em-



AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support CWI each time you shop, at no cost to you! When you shop at [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to CWI. Amazon donates .5% of your purchases to the charity of your choice. It's free to use and makes a donation for purchases you were going to make anyway.

Log into your Amazon account and enter Smile.Amazon into the search bar, click on "Change your Charity," and enter CWI into the search box, we are the fourth one down.

Targeted Donation For over 50 years, CWI has been enriching lives and empowering people to discover their potential. We have been able to significantly impact lives through innovative supports and services. Contributions have become a more important source of revenue for human services organizations as we have endured significant reductions in government funding. With your help, we can continue with our mission of empowering people and enriching lives throughout our community. We gladly accept: Venmo, Cash, Check, or Money Order Donations. Go to www.cwinc.org and click Donate.

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