

Supporting the Direct Care Workforce Campaign Overview

Background

As part of The Arc New York advocacy and efforts to support our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and overall workforce investment, we are engaging in a continued conversation with our congressional representatives encouraging them to support the [Better Care Better Jobs Act \(BCBJA\)](#) introduced in June. This legislation would include a major investment of \$400 Billion for states to expand access to Medicaid home and community based services (HCBS) and addresses the decades-long workforce crisis and our current emergency.

However, this historic investment is in danger of not being fully supported. In fact, it was recently reported that HCBS might receive a fraction of what President Biden initially proposed in his care economy infrastructure plan. As such, we must be diligent through the end of summer and through the fall to ensure that the entire \$400 billion package is included in the upcoming budget reconciliation resolution.

Support Investment in the I/DD Direct Care Workforce

Voluntary providers of supports and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are facing a critical workforce shortage, which needs immediate action by our federal representatives. In particular, we ask that they fully endorse the BCBJA, which will pave the way for much needed resources for the direct care workforce and beyond.

It is absolutely necessary that we secure adequate government funding to pay our DSPs a wage commensurate with their ability, experience, and performance. If we do not, programs could be reduced or eliminated due to lack of staffing, and many years of progress toward community integration, choice, and deinstitutionalization will be lost. We have already seen valuable DSPs leave the field due to the hardship they face. They are our front-line essential workers and deserve more.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, DSPs have conducted themselves with the utmost professionalism, adapting to ever changing government guidance, and new requirements. They are at the forefront of this crisis more than any other, adapting in ways that demonstrate their dedication to the individuals they serve.

The Arc New York Advocacy Plan

- The BCBJA operationalizes the proposed \$400 billion care economy infrastructure plan proposed by President Biden. It is our goal to engage and inform our congressional representatives about this and other opportunities to support workforce initiatives, as well as policies beneficial to individuals with I/DD and providers. You can view and share our advocacy update dedicated to this announcement [here](#).
- We created an online [campaign](#) for distribution through social media and email lists. The target audience is our federal representatives in the Senate and House of Representatives. Knowing how our advocates hear about campaigns and where they take action is important, so please consider using the specific links below. Both link to this campaign.
 - General Link: <https://p2a.co/1liesUu>
 - Social Media Link: <https://p2a.co/OTp4ZDL>
- We would also like to meet directly with our federal representatives and/or staff. The goal is to educate, but also understand the level of support we can expect from each legislator and their position on long-term DSP workforce and HCBS investment. Ask that question.
- If legislators are not available for our initial meeting, we will work to plan a future engagement through a site visit or virtual fly in.
 - Involving families and self-advocates is a great way to give them a voice, while also connecting legislators to their constituents
- The Arc New York state office can help coordinate NYS and congressional meetings through [Philip Aydinian](#), Director of Governmental Affairs.
 - Political geography includes multiple counties and/or legislators, depending on your Chapter's location. In many cases we can maximize impact if we all work together.
 - Many congressional and state offices require a list of attendees, affiliation, home address, and topic(s) to be discussed
 - Identify constituents within the district. It is impactful and important.
 - Highlight fiscal and social impact across the local community and political district
- Regional public media events are being planned. If you are interested in hosting or participating, please let [Philip Aydinian](#) or [Kate Geurin](#) know so we can appropriately coordinate and provide necessary support
- When you reach out to your legislators through calls, in person, or virtual meetings, please complete this [short survey](#) so we can track the impact of this initiative. It also helps us reach back out to legislators and build on the foundation you have laid.