



**Remarks for Delaware Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance Listening Session
RE Home- and Community-Based Services American Rescue Plan Increased FMAP
Spending Plan**

Submitted by Brian Hall, Executive Director, Autism Delaware

Good afternoon,

The folks listening to us are gathered here for similar and different reasons, but all of us have the people we serve in mind. I don't think today's participants are here to promote the uniqueness and/or variety of a service model. I believe we all share a common issue, and it makes no difference what type of service we provide, where we provide the service, and who is eligible for it. The fact of the matter is, we don't have staff to meet the increasing needs of our communities. We need help! Our services are great in theory, but it is the Direct Service Personnel who helps an individual or family achieve their desired goals. It is that staff member who is with a person or family during the good and bad times that truly make a difference.

As providers, we face the continued struggle of securing resources to ensure our doors remain open. The pandemic has led to a decline in personnel due to our inability to attract new candidates, and to the departure of employees due to retirement. We are struggling to meet the needs of individuals who have worked hard and are living their best lives. We are struggling to provide supports and the relationships needed to sustain individuals in their chosen area of work and/or way of living.

I am very concerned about the next groups of folks entering our service system. Who is going to walk by their side in their time of need? Who will help them establish their place in society? I don't have answers.

We need help! We were struggling with staffing before the pandemic. And this pandemic has further impacted the recruitment and retention of personnel. With business establishing sign-on bonuses, retention bonuses, and increasing starting hourly salaries, we must be more competitive in the marketplace. I believe that utilizing funds for increased workforce development to sustain the system is crucial.

We need help! We need the resources to compete. Some of us are using rainy-day funds to sustain current operations. And these are the resources that we hoped to use for further

partnerships and activities to better the lives of people. I don't have the answer...I also never imagined that our way of life would be put on hold for over a year. We need support...I am not asking that you pay for all of our challenges, I am asking that, as a partner, you do your part in helping us do our work for families of Delaware. We are supposed to be walking the path together...and together is the only way we will be able to address the long-term implications of not having personnel to deliver the services.

Thank you for taking time to listen,

Brian K. Hall

Brian Hall
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