



September 9, 2016

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## **#bFair2DirectCare Coalition Honors Direct Support Professionals**

*Sept. 11-17 is Nat'l Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week*

***New York's Direct Support Professionals Deserve a Living Wage***

To commemorate **National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week**, September 11-17, the **#bFair2DirectCare** Coalition has called on Governor Cuomo and all state legislators to honor New York's more than 100,000 direct support professionals and other direct care workers by providing the funding needed so these dedicated, trained professionals can earn a living wage.

The **#bFair2DirectCare** Coalition consists of non-profit organizations that provide direct services to New Yorkers with developmental disabilities – including autism, serious brain injury, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome. They provide these services on the state's behalf and, as 90% of their funding is from government, cannot raise salaries without increased government funding. These agencies haven't received a meaningful rate increase since 2008.

**Susan Constantino, President and CEO of Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State**, said: "We want and need to honor our direct care workers – the people who serve New York's more than 130,000 citizens with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) by paying a competitive, living wage."

The **#bFair2DirectCare** coalition is now focused on voter education as the best way to bring attention to the potential crisis in community care for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities.

A 2016 report on DSP staffing from the **#bFair2DirectCare** coalition found member agencies statewide had a 9.3 percent vacancy rate and 23.1 percent one-year turnover rate. DSPs at not-for-profit provider agencies are 73 percent women, 42 percent African-American and nine percent Latino. To provide them with a living wage (\$17.72 in NYC/LI and \$15.54 across the rest of New York) would require a 2.3 percent rate increase in each of the next six years.

**Former Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg, who started the Harvey and Ellen Weisenberg Foundation to help people with developmental disabilities**, said: “This is a small investment to make which would honor our DSPs and help all New Yorkers live life to the fullest in their local communities. It is the type of investment in our quality of life that makes New York the Empire State.”

Members of the **#bFair2DirectCare** coalition include:

Alliance of Long Island Agencies (ALIA)  
Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State (CP of NYS)  
The Developmental Disability Alliance of Western New York (DDAWNY)  
The InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies (IAC)  
The NYS Association of Community Residential Agencies (NYSACRA)  
NYSARC Inc.  
New York State Rehabilitation Association (NYSRA)

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