#bFair2DirectCare "300 Days to Better Pay" Campaign

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SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR FROM A PARENT

As the parent of a child with autism (or cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, a serious brain injury, or other intellectual or developmental disability), I write as a supporter of the ***#bFair2DirectCare Coalition's*** "**300 Days to Better Pay**" Campaign.

When I learned my child (son/daughter) had a disability, I was gratified to find support for my whole family right in the community. Day programs, transportation, job coaching, residential support, medical support, and recreation, all right here, staffed by dedicated and caring direct support professionals who treat *my* son/daughter like they are a part of *their* family.

Direct support professionals (DSP) working for not-for-profit organizations help me around the clock and are a part of the fabric that holds our communities together. They help my child achieve his/her best and be a part of the community. Increasingly, however, we are losing these vital workers to less demanding jobs, like fast food restaurants and big box stores, that suddenly pay as much as, if not more, than these vital jobs. Flat state government funding and new wage and benefit mandates created this growing worker shortage. We are now facing a crisis that will get worse unless New York State backs up its mandates by funding a living wage for DSP worker salaries.

Please support fair pay for direct support professionals and other vital staff that help support tens of thousands of New Yorkers by calling and writing your state legislators and Governor Cuomo. Tell them you support the "300 Days to Better Pay" campaign calling on New York State to provide fair pay for the DSPs working in every community across the state. Tell them you want them to #bFair2DirectCare and help us keep our communities vibrant and inclusive of all.

Please follow and like us on Facebook (@BFair2DirectCare) and Twitter (#bFair2DirectCare).

Thank you for your support for my family and for families across New York.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR FROM A DSP

I am one of New York State's 100,000 direct support professionals (DSPs), providing support every day to New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities. You've probably seen me, or someone like me, working in the community. I proudly work with these wonderful people and their families so they can all live in the community and have full and rewarding lives.

While my paycheck comes from a community not-for-profit agency, the money to pay me comes mostly from New York State. I deserve a raise – just like the raise mandated for fast food workers. The Governor said private business needed to increase wages to pay their workers a fair wage; we ask the Governor and State Legislature to do the same and increase reimbursement rates for the local not-for-profits that provide these invaluable services.

DSPs' salaries used to start several dollars above the minimum wage. Because of the stagnant pay, now we start at the minimum wage or just above. I know far too many co-workers who left for clerical or retail sales jobs last year. They didn't want to give up our special profession. They just couldn't afford to stay. In fact, statewide the annual turnover rate is more than 20 percent. As a result, most not-for-profit provider agencies have vacancy rates in excess of 10 percent in important jobs.

Those workers who left were supporting families in our community, some working with children with autism; others supporting citizens with Down syndrome or cerebral palsy or a family dealing with a loved one with a serious brain injury. Imagine how you would feel if your family needed that help, but it was no longer available in the community, but only in an institution.

I support the ***#bFair2DirectCare*** Coalition's "**300 Days to Better Pay"** campaign. Fast food workers are starting at wages it took me years to reach. While my job is rewarding, it is also demanding and every week I see another direct care worker leave because we no longer make much more than the mandated minimum wage. That's a shame and it has to be corrected before it is too late.

So join me, the people and families I support and some wonderful community organizations and write to Governor Cuomo and your state legislators today. Tell them that you support your community, your neighbors and the "300 Days to Better Pay" campaign.

Please follow and like us on Facebook (@BFair2DirectCare) and Twitter (#bFair2DirectCare).

DRAFT COMMUNITY MEMBER LETTER TO GOVERNOR CUOMO

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Across the state, more than 125,000 people with developmental disabilities depend on the care of direct support professionals to live, work, and learn as part of their communities. These non-profit professionals perform challenging and intimate job responsibilities in support of their fellow New Yorkers with highly intensive needs. Today I/we write to ask you to support the #bFair2DirectCare coalition's "***300 Days to Better Pay***" campaign calling for increased state funding to provide a living wage to this dedicated and vital workforce.

Non-profit providers who make up the **#bFair2DirectCare** coalition rely on government support for 90 percent of the funding of these services, 80 percent of which goes directly to staff wages. Direct care staff are entrusted by the state to support New Yorkers who have autism, serious brain injury, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and other intellectual and developmental disabilities in our communities and deserve a fair rate of pay for the vital care they provide.

After eight years without a significant adjustment in wages and recent increases in the minimum wage, direct care workers are leaving for other jobs at an alarming rate. Nearly 10 percent of the direct care jobs in the state now are vacant and turnover is 23 percent annually. Without competitive wages and the corresponding state rate increase, we face a staffing crisis that threatens all we have done to let New Yorker's with intellectual and developmental disabilities leave state institutions and live in our communities.

Governor Cuomo, we need your help. It's time for New York State to recognize the skills and knowledge of staff that support people with developmental disabilities with wages that reflect the complexity of their work. It's time to say a fair day's work equals a fair day's pay.

That's why I/we support the **#bFair2DirectCare** Coalition's "***300 Days to Better Pay***" campaign. Now we call on you to please support my community, our neighbors, and the "300 Days to Better Pay" campaign and include funding for wage increases for the people that support people with developmental disabilities in your next state budget.

Thank you.

DRAFT DSP WEEK RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Alliance of Long Island Agencies, Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State, The Developmental Disability Alliance of Western New York, The InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies, the New York State Association of Community Residential Agencies, NYSARC, Inc., and the New York State Rehabilitation Association, supporting more than 125,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities and employing more than 100,000 direct support professionals, have joined together to form the *#bFair2DirectCare* Coalition, and

WHEREAS, The #bFair2Direct Care Coalition has launched the "*300 Days to Better Pay*" campaign to implore the state Legislature and the Governor to provide funding for a living wage for direct support professionals, and

WHEREAS, Direct support workers, direct care workers, personal assistants, personal attendants, in-home support workers and paraprofessionals (referred to as "direct support professionals") and preschool teachers and aides are the primary providers of publicly funded long-term supports and services for thousands of New Yorkers with developmental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Direct support professionals' first allegiance is to the person they support; they must build a close, trusted relationship with an individual with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the majority of direct support professionals are employed in home and community based settings and this trend is projected to increase; and

WHEREAS, A direct support professional assists an individual with disabilities with the most intimate needs, on a daily basis, including a broad range of supports such as preparation of meals; helping with medications; bathing; dressing; mobility; getting to school, work, religious and recreational activities; and general daily affairs; and

WHEREAS, A direct support professional is responsible for supporting the emotional, physical and personal well-being of individuals receiving support, helping to keep an individual with disabilities connected to the family and community of the individual; and

WHEREAS, Direct support professionals enable individuals with disabilities to live self-directed, meaningful and productive lives; they are the key to allowing an individual with disabilities to live more successfully in the community; and

WHEREAS, Direct support professionals respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people they support; they advocate with the people they support, promoting their human rights, their civil rights and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, _____ appreciates the contribution of direct support professionals in supporting the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in the

State of New York, and further recognizes them as integral in supporting the long-term support and services system in this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, #bFair2DirectCare Coalition member agencies have not had a meaningful Medicaid rate increase since 2008, and

WHEREAS, #bFair2DirectCare Coalition member agencies receive 90 percent of their funding from government and pay 80 percent of their budgets to wages, and

WHEREAS, #bFair2DirectCare Coalition member agencies direct support workforce is 73 percent female, 43 percent black/African American and 8.5 percent Hispanic/Latino, and

WHEREAS, #bFair2DirectCare Coalition member agencies face crisis level staffing with nearly a 10 percent vacancy rate and 23 percent annual turnover in direct support jobs, now be it therefore

RESOLVED, That _____ pause to applaud and thank direct support professionals during Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week, September 11-17, 2016, and

RESOLVED, The #bFair2DirectCare Coalition calls upon the State of New to recognize the compassionate and professional excellence of these individuals by supporting fair pay and a living wage for direct support professionals and other vital staff that help support tens of thousands of New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, and

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.

DRAFT LETTER TO GOVERNOR CUOMO TO ACCOMPANY RESOLUTION

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Over 125,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities depend on the care of direct support professionals to live, work, and learn as part of their communities. These professionals perform difficult and intimate work with people that need this support to live safe and fulfilling lives.

Tens of thousands of direct support professionals (DSPs) and other direct care workers at not-for-profit organizations help people around the clock and are part of the fabric that holds our communities together.

Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week was September 11-17, 2016 and the Board of Directors of _____ passed the attached resolution to support and honor our direct support professionals, including the wonderful staff that supports my son/daughter/sister/brother.

After eight years without a significant adjustment in wages and recent increases in the minimum wage, we believe it is time for New York State to recognize the skills and knowledge of staff that support people with developmental disabilities with wages that reflect the complexity of their work. These are not minimum wage jobs and to not increase wages threatens the progress that has been made over the last four decades for people with disabilities. It's time to say a fair day's work equals a fair day's pay.

We support the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition's "300 Days to Better Pay" campaign. We ask you to recognize the compassionate and professional excellence of these individuals by supporting fair pay and a living wage for direct support professionals and other vital staff that help support tens of thousands of New Yorkers with developmental disabilities. Please include funding for wage increases for the people that support people with developmental disabilities in your next state budget.

#bFair2DirectCare

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)

Social Media, How You Can Help

As you know, an important part of advocacy is building awareness around an issue. The #bFair2DirectCare Coalition is bringing together New York not-for-profit community-based organizations that support tens of thousands of people with developmental disabilities to advocate for Direct Support Professionals and other support staff to receive fair compensation for the vital work that they do.

We need every member of the developmental disability community to join our advocacy. A quick and effective way of doing this is by getting families, staff, self-advocates, volunteers, and organization leaders to join our social media and help expand our networks so that we can spread our message to the widest possible audience.

Please ask family members, staff, self-advocates, volunteers, and organization leaders to join us by doing three simple things:

1. Send an email to all of the audiences listed above and ask them to 'Like' the **bFair2DirectCare Facebook Page** and 'Follow' the **bFair2DirectCare Twitter account**.

2. Post to your Organization's social media accounts, asking your social media network to 'Like' the bFair2DirectCare Facebook Page and 'Follow' the bFair2DirectCare Twitter account.

3. Interact with the bFair2DirectCare social media accounts by liking, sharing and commenting on posts and tweets! Please visit and interact with our social media accounts several times each week.

Included in this toolkit are draft e-mails that you can send to your employees and families, as well as social media posts that you can share on your Organization's social media accounts. Please feel free to use these drafts as is, or tailor them to your liking.

Draft Email To Employees

Dear Direct Care Workers,

The support you provide to people with developmental disabilities, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is critical and we know that you deserve to earn a living wage for all of your hard work.

Unfortunately, over the last eight years state funding for developmental disability organization staff wages has only increased once. We need to be able to pay you a salary that is competitive and commensurate with your responsibilities. But, without an increase in state funding we do not have the funds to adequately increase salaries.

As you may know, the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition recently launched our #300DaystoBetterPay campaign to call on Albany to address this issue before the next state budget is adopted on April 1, 2017.

It's time for New York State to step up and provide funds that value direct care workers and the people they care for!

We ask that you join our efforts by following the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition social media accounts from your personal computer/social media accounts. Here you can find updates on our initiatives and ways for you to get involved in the campaign.

You can join our efforts by doing the following:

1. 'Like' the Facebook page: www.facebook.com/BFair2DirectCare<https://www.facebook.com/BFair2DirectCare>

2. 'Follow' the Twitter account: @Fair2DirectCare<https://twitter.com/Fair2DirectCare>

3. Interact with the bFair2DirectCare social media accounts by liking, sharing, and commenting on posts and tweets!

Your support is critical to the success of this campaign.

Thank you!

Draft Email to Family Members

Dear Family Members,

The support our Direct Support Professionals provide to our family members with developmental disabilities, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is critical and I am sure that you agree that they deserve to earn a living wage for all of their hard work.

Unfortunately, over the last eight years State funding for developmental disability organization staff wages has only increased once. We need to be able to pay salaries that are competitive and commensurate with responsibilities. But, without an increase in state funding we do not have the funds to adequately increase salaries. Without an increase in state funding, we will be unable to retain our workforce or fill vacancies.

As you may know, the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition recently launched our #300DaystoBetterPay campaign to call on Albany to address this issue before the next state budget is adopted on April 1, 2017.

It's time for New York State to step up and provide funds that value direct care workers and the people they care for!

We ask that you join our efforts by following the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition social media accounts from your social media accounts. Here you can find updates on our initiatives and ways for you to get involved in the campaign.

You can join our efforts by doing the following:

1. 'Like' the Facebook page: www.facebook.com/BFair2DirectCare<https://www.facebook.com/BFair2DirectCare>

2. 'Follow' the Twitter account: @Fair2DirectCare<https://twitter.com/Fair2DirectCare>

3. Interact with the bFair2DirectCare social media accounts by liking sharing and commenting on posts and tweets!

Your support is critical to the success of this campaign.

Thank you!

Draft Facebook Post

It's been eight years since we have been given a real raise, and we are now facing wage

mandates and new labor rules without having the adequate funding to sustain them. To stand up for our direct support staff and the critical work that they do, we're joining forces with agencies around the state through the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition! Join us as we call on Albany to address this issue by following @BFair2DirectCare!

Draft Tweets

Stand up for direct support staff & the critical work that they do by joining the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition & following @Fair2DirectCare!

NYS must step up & provide funds that protect direct care workers & the people they care for! Follow @Fair2DirectCare to join the fight!

Direct support workers do more than the minimum, they DESERVE to make more than the minimum! Follow @Fair2DirectCare to show your support!

#bFair2DirectCare "300 Days to Better Pay" Campaign

Message Points for Legislative Visits

1. **Not-for-profit Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) funded provider agencies deliver about 85 percent of the needed daily services to the 130,000 people with developmental disabilities in New York State. We do important work on the state's behalf.**

    a. Our organizations support New Yorkers who have autism, serious brain injury, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities.
    b. Our employees are dedicated to the people they serve, but also dedicated to their families and their futures.
    c. Caring for people with complex needs is a rewarding yet difficult job which requires a high level of responsibility and skill.
    d. We do this in loving, community environments and not in big state institutions.

2. **We're facing a perfect storm that could destroy our organization and the services we provide.**

    a. Funding for salaries is inadequate – we have had an average Medicaid increase of one-half-of-one-percent per year over the last eight years.
    b. State-mandated costs are rising -- potential 67percent increase in the minimum wage.
    c. Plus new federal rules regarding mandatory overtime payments.

3. **State government controls our funding**

    a. More than 90 percent of our money comes from government funding.
    b. 80 percent of that goes directly to wages for staff who provide care – direct support professionals, teachers' aides, drivers, cooks and others making minimum wage or a little bit more.
    c. The only way we can increase their wages is for government to increase the rates they decide they will give us.

4. **The current workforce shortage threatens all the good work we've been able to do for the people in our care.**

    a. Community integration
    b. High levels of support necessary for safety and person-centered choices
    c. Civil rights of the people we serve

5. ***The "300 Days to Better Pay"* campaign tells Albany it needs to step up.**

    a. Increase funding for our caregivers
    b. Fair wage for a fair day's work
    c. Our compassionate workforce does so much more than the minimum.

6. **Albany's failure to step up will be devastating**

    a. We are already losing our workers to higher-paying places like WalMart and Target, which are raising their pay levels.
        i. Vacancy rates for DSPs are already at almost 10 percent statewide.
        ii. One-year new employee turnover rate exceeds 20 percent.
    b. Our agencies could close and many years of progress in community integration and deinstitutionalization will be lost.
    c. People will no longer be able to choose the activities they wish to engage in, because there won't be staff to help them.

d. The State will have no choice but to add far more expensive state employees and the cost to taxpayers will skyrocket.

7. It’s time for Albany to Be Fair to Direct Care

a. Include provider stabilization funding in the next state budget to start us on a path to an hourly living wage that exceeds the minimum wage over the next several years.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 24, 2016

CONTACTS:

Local:	Ron Gold	ron@marketingworkspr.com	516-297-1637
	Margaret Raustiala	mrconslutinginc@gmail.com	631-521-1458
Statewide:	Steve Greenberg	steve@greenbergpr.com	518-469-9858
	Bob Bellafiore	bob@stanhope-ny.com	518-928-8471

MEDIA ADVISORY

Coalition of Local & Statewide Advocates for People with Developmental Disabilities to Hold Mineola News Conference TODAY, June 24 11 am In support of 300 Days to Better Pay Campaign

WHAT: Advocates for people with developmental disabilities – including members of the **#bFair2DirectCare** coalition, direct service providers, local agencies, parents, self-advocates, and local members of the New York State Legislature – will hold a news conference to highlight the "300 Days to Better Pay" campaign calling for a funding increase in the New York State budget for wages for underpaid staff.

WHEN: TODAY, Friday, June 24th at 11 am

WHERE: Nassau County Supreme Court Building, 100 Supreme Court Drive, Mineola

The news conference will be held on the South side of the building

WHO: **#bFair2DirectCare** statewide coalition members and advocates for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, including self-advocates, their families, and service providers.

Former Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg and State Senator Kemp Hannon will also be participating.

WHY: "The remarkable progress we've made since deinstitutionalization is put totally at risk by this perfect storm of wage mandates, marketplace competition and new labor rules, unless the state steps up to provide funds to protect our workers and the people they care for," the **#bFair2DirectCare** coalition said. "Eight years is enough time to go without a meaningful rate increase."

#bFair2DirectCare is the voice of 128,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, who often cannot speak for themselves. **#bFair2DirectCare** is also the call to action to remind state leaders that direct care not-for-profit agency workers are agents of the state who need a fair rate of pay which is commensurate with their vital support responsibilities.

#bFair2DirectCare members 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)

Follow **#bFair2DirectCare** on Facebook and Twitter (@Fair2DirectCare)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **June 22, 2016**

CONTACTS:

Local:	Kathy Hartnett, Upstate Cerebral Palsy		315-724-6907 x 2308
	Mark Dudek, The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter		315- 272-5156
Statewide:	Steve Greenberg	steve@greenbergpr.com	518-469-9858
	Bob Bellafiore	bob@stanhope-ny.com	518-928-8471

#bFair2DirectCare Coalition Continues "300 Days to Better Pay" Campaign

Utica News Conference Highlights Need To Increase Pay for Direct Care Workers

UTICA, NY – After eight years without significant Medicaid rate increases, providers of supports and services for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities face a perfect storm of inadequate funding, new laws and policies that threaten community integration, the level of support and the civil rights that people with disabilities have achieved, advocates said today at a news conference in Utica.

Organizations that support individuals with developmental disabilities have seen only one rate increase since the recession of 2008, an average increase of less than one-half of one percent per year. Now they face as much as a 67 percent increase in the mandated minimum wage, new overtime rules and growing competition from other employers.

More than 90 percent of the funding that sustains these organizations comes from government, and 80 percent of that goes directly to staff wages. The only way that these organizations can raise wages for direct support professionals, teachers' aides, drivers, cooks and others making minimum wage, or a little bit more, is for government to increase the rates they provide for the delivery of these critical services to New York's most vulnerable citizens.

"New York needs to do a better job of investing in the dedicated and caring staff members that support people with disabilities," said Susan Constantino, President & CEO of Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State (CP of NYS). "We require a great deal of them. We entrust

them with the safety and well-being of individuals who we support. They do so much more than the minimum and deserve to be fairly compensated. New York State must step up and provide the needed resources to pay these workers a fair wage."

Earlier this month the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition launched its "300 Days to Better Pay" Campaign, which calls on the Governor and State Legislature to address this critical funding issue in the next state budget to avoid a crisis.

"This is a critical issue for all agencies, including The Arc," said **Karen Korotzer, Executive Director, The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter**. "We are all struggling to recruit people to take on these important jobs, and the number one reason is compensation. We are fortunate to have great staff who go above and beyond every day, and it's time that we show them they matter to us all by fighting for fair wages. These are not minimum wage jobs, they are the most important jobs in our agency."

"The work that our Direct Support staff do on a daily basis is phenomenal and well beyond that of minimum wage positions," said **Louis Tehan, President and CEO of Upstate Cerebral Palsy**. "They are dedicated, hardworking and responsible for caring for our individuals' lives, many of whom cannot speak or care for themselves. Our Direct Support staff deserve pay commensurate with their job responsibilities, which are crucial to the health and wellbeing of hundreds of children and adults, and thus should be adequately funded."

Tish Comstock-Allcorn, self-advocate, People are Beautiful, said: "With the small wages that Chrissy and many direct support professionals make, there is a real fear of "what if." What if she leaves so she can better support her own family, then what will happen to my family?"

Donna Goss, Residence Manager, Upstate CP (direct support professional), said: "We are responsible for the physical and emotional needs of the people we support. It is more than physically being there and this is not a typical Monday through Friday job. When I end my shift I often receive calls from a person I support just wanting to talk or needing help or support with a personal issue. I am connected to the people I support all of the time and am there for them whenever they need me."

Kelsie Bongiorno, Residence Counselor, Upstate CP (direct support professional), said: "Some examples of our responsibilities are giving the people we support medicine, having to be hands on with people who need help doing day to day living activities and being their support system when their families are not available. Not only do we have these responsibilities but we also customize each person's care. This isn't just a job to the employees at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, this is their second home and the people we support become our family."

State Senator Joseph Griffo (R-Oneida County) said, "We appreciate all of the outstanding services these organizations provide on behalf of people with developmental disabilities, and the hard work of their staff members should never be taken for granted. We recognize, and agree, that funding is an issue that needs to be addressed and resolved in a way that is mutually beneficial to the employees, the agencies and the state."

Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi (D-Oneida County) said, "Family members of people with developmental disabilities often tell me how important direct care workers are to their loved ones. When there is a rapid turnover rate in these employees, it obviously affects the services and care these individuals receive. I have made it a priority to work with my colleagues in the state legislature to help the agencies that care for the developmentally disabled to have the resources they need to fairly compensate their employees, who perform such important work on a daily basis."

Ann Hardiman, Executive Director of the NYS Association of Community and Residential Agencies, said, "Plain and simple: it's about fair pay. Direct support professionals (DSPs) play the most critical role in a person with a disability's life. The work is demanding and they do it with dedication and commitment. There is no system of supports and services without the direct support professional so New York State must provide funding to pay DSPs what they're worth."

According to a 2016 Vacancy and Turnover Survey recently provided by the coalition to the NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), competition from other employers has increased to the point where coalition agencies currently have a nearly 10 percent vacancy rate and more than a 20 percent turnover rate in these important jobs – a significant increase in both vacancies and turnover in just the last year.

The #bFair2DirectCare Coalition campaign is planning other events in the next several weeks in Rochester, Mineola and on the steps of City Hall in New York City to educate the public and our elected leaders.

# # #

#bFair2DirectCare statewide supporters include:

- Alliance of Long Island Agencies (ALIA)
- Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State (CP of NYS)
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- NYSARC Inc.
- New York State Rehabilitation Association (NYSRA)

How to Organize a *#bFair2DirectCare*
"300 Days to Better Pay" Campaign Press Event

Event Checklist and Planning Tips

During the weeks of October 10 and October 17 we encourage organizations to host press events in their communities to educate the media, legislators, and your community about the workforce crisis facing developmental disability organizations across New York State. Here is an event check list to help you prepare:

- Set Event Date – please notify the coalition at bfair2directcare@gmail.com

- Establish Event Location – Consider hosting the event at a location that is convenient for members of the press to maximize the likelihood of coverage. High visibility public places are optimal, such as near Town Hall, City Hall, or the downtown business district. You can use your offices or programs, but remember we want to maximize the pubic visibility and press attendance.

- Event Time

    - Set a start time for general audience, time speakers/hosts should arrive, and time staff should arrive for pre-event set-up
    - Check community calendars and try not to conflict with other events that the press may be covering
    - Late morning is generally a good time for a press event

- Event Host(s) – your organization can host its own event or partner with other organizations in the community.

- Designate a Lead Contact for Event Organization – This is the person in charges of logistics for the program on location. Make sure everyone involved has his or her cell phone and e-mail address

- Designate a Lead Contact for Press – This is the person in charge of inviting the media. Make sure

everyone involved has his or her cell phone and e-mail address

- Designate a Lead Spokesperson – This is the person who will be emcee and lead spokesperson. Make sure everyone involved has his or her cell phone and e-mail address

- Secure Speakers

    - A family member – Ask them to describe the important role the staff playing in ensuring their loved ones live a safe, fulfilling, and happy life. They can also share the anxiety that comes from frequent staff turnover
    - A direct support professional (DSP) – Ask them to describe how much they love their job, the vital work they do, how hard it is to make ends meet, and how important I is for them to earn a living wage
    - A person receiving services and/or self-advocate – The person supported can talk about how their staff helps them to succeed and how much they love their staff and hate to see them leave

- Invite Your State Legislators – Invite your Senator and Assemblymember and key local elected officials to join you and make a statement of support during the press event. A key goal is to get your Senator or Assemblymember to stand up in public and say they will be your champion and will fight for you.

- Several Days in Advance of the Event Send Out a Press Advisory; Send Out a Reminder 24 hours Before the Event (see sample)

    - Include daily and weekly publications, local blogs, network and cable TV, and news radio
    - No media outlet is too small!
    - Brief "friendly" reporters in advance with background material; remind them with a personal e-mail or message on the day of the event

- On the Day of Event Send Out Press Release That Includes a Quote from Each Speaker (see sample)

- Invite Audience Members

    - Family Members
    - Board Members
    - Community Supporters
    - People Supported
    - Self-Advocates
    - DSPs and other Direct Care Staff
    - Elected Officials
    - Administrators and Executives

- Logistics and Materials To Consider
    - On-site “hosts” or “greeters” to greet speakers, audience members, dignitaries, and press
    - Put together an Agenda and/or Speaker List – layout timeline to make key points in a concise fashion and keep on schedule; members of the press have a limited amount of time
    - Have a list of all of the different organizations that are participating in the event and acknowledge their program participants, staff, and family members from the podium. Try not to miss anyone, it is all about them!
    - Anticipate reporter’s questions and think about answers in advance
    - Consider having handouts
        - The Coalition has two fact sheets that you can use:
            - Growing Vacancy and Turnover Data
            - DSPs – A Fair Day’s Pay for a Fair Day’s Work
    - Arrange Podium and Sound System
    - Signage (outside, podium, inside)
    - Backdrop
    - Props & Visual Aids
    - Sharpies, Pens, Notepads, flipchart for last minute needs
    - Camera and Someone Assigned to Take Photos
    - Video Recorder and Someone Assigned to Record Video
    - Wifi
    - Room Set-Up, Tables, Chairs
    - Projector, Screen, Computer (if needed)
    - Refreshments
    - Parking
    - Driving Directions
    - Sign-In Sheets

- Legal Considerations
    - If the event is inn public, do we need a permit or to notify the owners of the location of the event??
    - Do we need insurance?

- Event Social Media -- Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, Google +, Instagram, LinkedIn, blogs etc.
    - Link all Facebook and Twitter posts to #bFair2DirectCare
    - Prepare a series of posts to promote the event in advance

    - Person assigned to pre-event, event day, and follow-up social media.
    - Line up a list of individuals and organizations to tag/retweet
    - Broadcast highlights of key message during event and follow-up posts
    - Event Hashtag(s):
    - Create event pages on Facebook, LinkedIn, and/or Google+
    - Submit to relevant directories such as community calendars and blogs

- Include a post event story in your organization's publications and on your website. Share story with bFair2Direct Care who can link to and repost your story

DIRECT CARE STAFF SHORTAGES GROWING
VACANCY & TURNOVER SURVEY RESULTS

Not-for-profit OPWDD provider agencies that support people with developmental disabilities were surveyed to provide calendar year 2015 data on the growing turnover and vacancy rates for professional direct care staff (DSPs) and other support staff. Last year we collected 2014 data on the same questions to allow the measurement of workforce changes over time.

142 agencies in all regions of New York State responded to the survey. More than half had also responded to the 2015 survey, which had 136 respondents. Respondents had a total of 66,567 full and part-time DSPs and other support staff.

2015 VACANCY RATE:

Respondents had a **9.3% vacancy rate** for professional direct care staff (DSPs) and other support staff, which was **20% higher** than the 2014 rate of 7.76%.

2015 TURNOVER RATE:

Respondents had a **23.07% one-year turnover rate** for professional direct care staff (DSPs) and other support staff, which was **21% higher** than the 2014 rate of 19.05%.

2015 OVERTIME HOURS:

Respondents paid for **6,442,594 hours of overtime** for professional direct care staff (DSPs) and other support staff, which was **13.5% higher** than 2014's 5,673,787 overtime hours.

2015 WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS:

Respondents workforce of professional direct care staff (DSPs) and other support staff is:

- 73% women
- 42.3% black/African American
- 8.5% Hispanic/ Latino

REGIONAL VARIATION:

- All regions were relatively consistent in the percentage of women employed in these positons.
- Region 1 (NYC and LI) had the highest proportion of minority workers (50% black/African American and 11.6% Hispanic).

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WANTED: A FAIR DAY'S PAY FOR A FAIR DAY'S WORK

"One might summarize the job description of the direct support worker as requiring the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job and the caring of Florence Nightingale,"

Clarence Sundram, Governor Cuomo's Special Advisor on Vulnerable Persons

Direct Support Professionals currently earn on average between $10 and $13 per hour, yet the demands of the job far exceed their compensation.

Direct Support Professionals are the men and women who carry out a myriad of responsibilities to ensure that people with developmental disabilities live safe, fulfilling lives.

There are over 110,000 Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), with 97,000 working for not for profit agencies. Direct Support Professionals are the lynchpin of the system of supports for more than 130,000 people with developmental disabilities in New York. They enable individuals with disabilities to live self-directed, meaningful and productive lives and are key to making it possible for an individual with disabilities to live in the community. In order to become a DSP, an individual must complete a series of pre-employment requirements regulated by the state that include fingerprinting and criminal and various background checks.

WHO THEY ARE

- Direct Support Professionals and other staff who work in programs that support adults and children with developmental disabilities are a diverse group. 73% are women, many of whom are single mothers. 50.8% are either black or Latino.
- DSPs are the people who provide services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- DSPs are professionals who are highly trained in a wide variety of critical areas that include medication administration, first aid, CPR, safe behavioral de-escalation and intervention, safety, including OSHA regulations, fire drills/emergency evacuation procedures, on-the-job Core Competencies, and Code of Ethics developed by NADSP. DSPs must be knowledgeable of the laws, regulations and procedures designed to protect individuals.
- Being a DSP is physically strenuous work. It often involves the lifting and moving of individuals to meet their mobility needs and the performance of daily activities.

WHAT THEY DO

- DSPs are proficient in understanding and communicating complex information to others via daily logs, progress reports and electronic means. They must deal with an enormous burden of paperwork essential to regulatory compliance and service delivery documentation used for billing Medicaid.
- DSPs provide services and supports for activities of daily living including meal preparation, grooming and toileting.
- DSPs are responsible for medication administration. They receive extensive training leading to certification and are retested annually.
- DSPs are also responsible for tube feeding, diabetic & wound care, oxygen administration and must be knowledgeable of the operation of durable medical equipment including that are used for lifting, bathing and transporting individuals with developmental disabilities.
- DSPs transport individuals with disabilities to all activities throughout the community.
- DSPs teach personal care skills, money management and social skills.
- DSPs support the delivery of physical and behavioral health services in both routine and crisis situations.
- DSPs form close, trusted relationships with individuals with disabilities and their families, making community living in New York State a reality.
- DSPs respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people they support and serve as advocates through the promotion of human and civil rights.

WE CALL ON NEW YORK STATE TO GIVE DSPS AND OTHER WORKERS WHO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES A "FAIR DAY'S PAY FOR A FAIR DAY'S WORK."

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WANTED: A FAIR DAY'S PAY FOR A FAIR DAY'S WORK

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#bFair2DirectCare Coalition:

Seth Stein, Alliance of Long Island Agencies for Persons with Developmental Disabilities
Susan Constantino, Cerebral Palsy Associations of NYS
Rhonda Frederick, Developmental Disabilities Alliance of WNY
Peter Pierri, InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies, Inc.
Ann Hardiman, NYSACRA
Steve Kroll, NYSARC
Michael Seereiter, NYSRA