DOZENS DEMONSTRATE AT GOVERNOR'S MANSION
URGING NYS TO #BFAIR2DIRECTCARE

Albany, NY – January 17, 2017 -- About three dozen demonstrators representing the bFair2DirectCare Coalition gathered in front of the Governor's Mansion in Albany today to remind the Governor and the leaders of the New York State Legislature of the need to fund a wage increase for direct care staff working for non-profit agencies who support people with developmental disabilities.

The group stood outside the Governor's Mansion with signs as NYS Senators arrived for Governor Andrew Cuomo's presentation on his proposed budget. Many of the arriving Senators displayed support for the budget request to include $45 million dollars to increase wages for direct care staff. Senator Robert Ortt, Chair of the Senate's Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities Committee, and Senator Frederick J. Askshar II stopped to speak with the demonstrators and voiced their strong support for the proposal.

Direct care staff employed by non-profit agencies used to earn well above minimum wage. New York State has not increased the rates it pays for the services delivered by these agencies in 8 years. Since they derive more than 90% of their funding from government, they have been unable to keep pace with the rising minimum wage and increased competition from other industries. Today, most direct care workers at these non-profit agencies earn little more than the minimum wage, and at least 30% less than staff at state-run entities who perform the same duties. This has led to vacancy rates of more than 10% and one-year turnover rates of more than 20%.