

Help Wanted!

The IDD Workforce Crisis

Part I

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When we say THIS we mean THAT

- Crisis – Time of intense difficulty or trouble
- IDD – Intellectual or other developmental disabilities
- DSP – Direct Support Professional , Direct Support staff, Personal Care Assistant is an unlicensed person who delivers the services included in the individual service plan for a person with a disability
- Innovations – a Medicaid Waiver program for people with IDD
- COLA – is a Cost of Living Adjustment; an automatic wage increase that is annually determined based on a formula that includes what it actually costs to cover living expenses

History of the DSP Workforce

- State Operated DD Centers (now called Developmental Centers)
 1. Well trained staff with required standard curriculum working under the direction of skilled and experienced supervisory staff
 2. Back up staff and licensed staff available on site
 3. Assistive technology, adaptive equipment, nutritional support available on site
 4. Provided training and support to community DSPs
 5. State employees so they are provided a good salary and benefit pay raises and COLA

Group Homes

1. On the job training and with some standardized instruction
2. Back of staff if needed
3. Supervisory staff
4. Access to licensed personnel as needed
5. Reasonable salary and benefits with some waged increases over the years
6. Automatic wage increases and COLA are not available

- In Home Supports and Services

1. Some training available through providers; most training is provided in the home by family members
2. Supervised by QDDPs
3. Various curricula piloted through the years though no required standardized training is in place
4. Initial salaries were similar to the DD facilities but increased rates and wages did not apply to in home staff over the years.

The Workforce Crisis is Everywhere

- Especially in community and in-home supports for people with IDD
- CAP-C for medically fragile children, CAP-DA for elderly and disabled adults, ICF Group Homes, other group homes, personal care services and licensed professionals
- States across the country are struggling to solve this problem
- Covid made the problem worse and revealed weaknesses in our system
- This is not a new problem.
- The ultimate goal is to be able to recruit and maintain a cadre of high quality DSPs

Focus

- We are zeroing in on the Innovations Waiver
- Innovations provides that largest sum of money paid in support of people with IDD in our state
- Innovations is a home and community based waiver focusing on in-home support
- Innovations DSPs are the lowest paid DSPs in the state -\$11.50
- Innovations DSPs have no professional organization and no lobbyists
- All decisions made are based on no reliable data
- The vast majority of approved services are delivered by DSPs
- We have to begin somewhere!

Impact

- Individuals – There is a very large gap between authorized and delivered services. People are not getting the services they need
- Families- There has been a significant increase in the number of family members serving as paid DSPs
- Providers – Get paid for delivering services, if they have no one to deliver the services there is a crisis
- DSPs – Suffering burn-out, low wages impacting their families, no benefits
- NO DSPs = NO SERVICES

Future

- The situation is getting worse
- We cannot fill the DSP need now
- The addition of new Innovations slots and the implementation of the I Option will increase the need
- We have no choice. We must be able to recruit and maintain adequate numbers of these essential DSPs

Barriers

- We know there is a crises
- The DHHS in conjunction with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and the General Assembly must recognize the immediacy of this crisis and take all steps to resolve it
- Laser focus will be needed to assure that the message is unmistakable
- In review of all available data, increase in wages is by far the most important factor. Benefits come in second with credentialing, standard curriculum and career ladder way below the first two
- This is not an insurmountable problem!

So, What Do We Do?

- Be strategic
- Be crystal clear about the goal
- Join forces
- Understand that success in achievement of the wage increase for one group will increase attention to all groups and serve as a model for future success

Specific Solutions and Next Steps?

Tune in for Part 2