



#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.