



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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SUSAN SERINO July 23, 2021

| ISSUE: **DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

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HYDE PARK, NY – With New York facing a shortage of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) that puts vulnerable New Yorkers in harm’s way, Senators Sue Serino and Mike Martucci are urging the state to take immediate action to incentivize job training and retention to boost the workforce in this critical field.

DSPs play an invaluable role in New York’s ‘care economy’—working directly with individuals living with intellectual or physical disabilities with the goal of empowering those they serve to integrate into their community or the least restrictive environment. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, providers of these services are seeing a severe drop in qualified staff and applicants.

“I have received too many calls and emails from concerned residents who see the impact a lack of staff is having on the health and safety of their loved ones with intellectual and developmental disabilities,” said Senator Sue Serino. “Here in our community we #ThinkDifferently and it is far past time for the state to do the same and ensure that New Yorkers of all abilities have the resources they need not only to stay safe and healthy, but to truly thrive in meeting their full potential. That starts by ensuring organizations that serve this population have the staff they need to provide high quality care to all those they serve, which is why we are urging the state to make solving this staffing shortage a top priority.”

“Direct support professionals are the backbone of our care system for the Intellectually and developmentally disabled community,” said Senator Mike Martucci, Ranking Member of the Senate’s Standing Committee on Disabilities. “OPWDD must act swiftly to ensure that the alarming number of open positions identified in the New York Disabilities Advocate’s report are addressed. Working with local schools, we can train the next generation workforce that the I/DD community needs and provide them the care they deserve.”

A recent report released by the New York Disability Advocates—which surveyed more than 100 provider agencies—notes a staggering 74.3% increase in staff vacancy rates from pre-pandemic levels between January 2021 through April 2021 and a 93% decrease in job applicants in the first quarter of 2021.

To read a copy of the letter, [click here](#).