

MARYLAND'S DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE

A Crisis Before the Pandemic



DSPs SUPPORT OVER 17,000 MARYLANDERS

Who is a DSP?

A direct support professional (DSP) provides an array of services that support people with developmental disabilities to live and work in their communities. DSPs perform a wide array of responsibilities based on the unique needs and goals of each person they support. Their work ranges from helping people learn life skills, to serving as a job coach, to providing personal care.

Because of their efforts, thousands of Marylanders are living, learning and working in their *communities* - not stuck in State institutions.

How Are DD Community Services Different?

- ❖ DD community services are funded through Medicaid and receive a 50/50 state/federal match.
- ❖ DSPs largely provide services 24 hours/day;
- ❖ The need for services is lifelong, not sporadic or short term;
- ❖ Private insurance does not cover these services.

What is the Crisis?

- 1 in 3 direct support staff don't stay in their jobs 6 months;
- Over half of direct support staff don't last 1 year;
- The **vast majority leave voluntarily** because of high stress, low-wage work; they can make as much if not more working for retailers at higher starting wages;
- Half of all providers have a direct support vacancy rate over 16%;
- 1 in 4 providers has a direct support vacancy rate over 24%;
- Such high vacancy rates affect not only people who use supports, but make it challenging for providers to expand and serve new people, whether from the Waiting List, or transitioning youth.

What Can You Do?

Support the 4% rate increase for DD community supports included in the Governor's proposed FY 2022 budget!