



Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

KERRY A. DELANEY
Acting Commissioner

Joint Legislative Budget Hearing Testimony New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

State Fiscal Year 2017-18 Executive Budget
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Senator Young, Senator Savino, Assemblyman Farrell, Senator Ort, Assemblywoman Gunther and other distinguished members of the Legislature. Good afternoon, I am Helene DeSanto, Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner for the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about Governor Cuomo's 2017-2018 Executive Budget proposal and how it will benefit the more than 136,000 New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are eligible for OPWDD services.

Under the Governor's leadership, OPWDD continues to make significant strides in the transformation to a more integrated, person centered, system of services and supports for the people we serve. This year, the Executive Budget proposes \$4.3 billion in State funding (\$7.3 billion including Federal funds) to support integrated, community-based services and OPWDD's oversight of state and not-for-profit providers.

OPWDD's ongoing system-wide transformation is informed by OPWDD's unprecedented engagement over the past two years with individuals, families, our nonprofit provider partners, and you -- our partners in the Legislature. This feedback has led to significant new investments in the 2017-2018 Executive Budget. This year's budget proposes significant new investments in integrated OPWDD services including:

- \$120 million in all-shares funding to expand services for new and currently eligible individuals;
- \$27 million all-shares funding to support provider agencies' compliance with new minimum wage standards;
- \$24 million in new funding to support people's transition from developmental centers to appropriate community based settings;
- \$15 million in capital funding to expand affordable housing opportunities for OPWDD-eligible people; and

- \$21 million investment in expansion of OPWDD's successful START program; our crisis response, intervention and treatment program.

In addition, as part of OPWDD's ongoing transition to managed care, the budget provides for OPWDD to access Department of Health resources to cover the administrative costs associated with managed care. OPWDD is committed to reinvesting any savings that are realized from its transition to managed care back into services for people with developmental disabilities.

New York funds and operates the nation's largest residential support system for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities – a \$5.1 billion annual investment. More than 37,000 New Yorkers currently live in OPWDD certified housing, such as group homes, and another 4,200 are eligible for rental vouchers that assist them to live independently within their communities. Still, the need to expand residential opportunities for the people we serve is a major focus for OPWDD. Many families remain concerned that there won't be an available housing opportunity when their loved one needs one. With the Governor's support, OPWDD has developed a multi-year housing strategy designed to meet the identified demand. In the next three years, OPWDD anticipates that approximately 4,900 individuals currently living at home may require a certified residential opportunity and an additional 1,400 will seek more independent living arrangements that rental subsidies and other uncertified options can provide. OPWDD will meet this demand using a mixture of existing and newly developed opportunities which will be accessed based on a person-centered process. OPWDD will also participate in the Governor's \$20 billion affordable and supportive housing plan and, as mentioned previously, access \$15 million in capital funds to help develop independent housing opportunities in communities throughout the state.

Before taking your questions, I would also like to acknowledge the concerns related to the people who are the foundation of our service system for New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities – our direct support professionals. We are engaged in regular and ongoing dialogue with our provider partners on solutions to address their workforce concerns. While the budget includes \$27 million in State and Federal funding to support increases in the minimum wage for direct support professionals, we recognize the need to continue our focus on efforts that will address recruitment and retention of a highly qualified and stable direct support workforce.

Thank you for your continuing support and advocacy. We look forward to working with you -- our partners in the Legislature -- and all of our stakeholders, to achieve real and lasting system-wide transformation on behalf of our friends, neighbors and loved ones with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I welcome your questions.