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Testimony before the Joint Legislative Hearing **Workforce Development Budget**

Wednesday, January 24th 2018

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of our membership. The **Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Association of New York State** supports consumer directed personal assistance providers and recipients in all counties of New York State, offering supportive services, including, but not limited to: advocacy, systems change, and the promotion of consumer control and self determination.

CDPAANYS is an independent association, the only such organization in New York State to exclusively represent fiscal intermediaries. CDPAANYS has worked closely with the New York State Department of Health to build CDPA since the very beginning, and has served as the sole organization fighting for many of the rights and freedoms enjoyed by consumers, personal assistants and fiscal intermediaries.

Without action from the legislature, this is a budget that will force more New Yorkers into nursing homes, even though home & community-based services are far more affordable for the state. Meanwhile, over 17,000 seniors languish on waiting lists for home care, case management, and other critical services, while New York's Medicaid population has too few hours authorized or provided, or people go without services altogether. Investment in the home care and direct care workforce is a vital next step for the state.

New York must not exclude home care from our workforce development agenda. It is the fastest growing occupational sector, and the one in which women (esp. women of color) are overrepresented. We urge the state to support a feminist workforce development agenda by investing in home care in 2018. We can begin by expanding the \$3 million rural workforce study so that it can actually go to wages once the study is completed. If we can expand the rural study, get real resources behind it, that would be a meaningful first step in preparing our state for the years ahead. The state has already allocated \$289 million to the developmental disabilities community, but the rest of the sector needs support as well. In this year's budget, we have an opportunity to fund a workforce study not just focused on rural areas and fee for service. The \$3 million designated for workers should go to workers, not to pay for the study itself. Let's create wage pass-through policies and requirements. In addition, all data



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collection on the workforce should include measurement of workforce volume, stability, and compensation all across the state.

In addition, I echo Allison Cook's recommendation that the committee coordinate with the Committee on Health to include a budget provision requiring input from workforce development experts when establishing the design of the proposed rural home and community based services study and when determining whether rate enhancements are necessary. The Health and Mental Hygiene Article VII Legislation proposes the creation of a study of home and community based services in rural parts of the state, which will determine whether rate increases are necessary. This is an important study, and should be conducted throughout the state (not solely in rural areas), should include more than fee-for-service providers, and needs greater investment to allow for the necessary rates increases. Most importantly, the study should include input from the direct care workforce itself, both in the design of the study and the determination of whether rate increases are necessary. We look forward to partnering with you to create a task force that is truly representative of all the constituencies that make up the Caring Majority.

Home care and CDPA are driving local economies across New York. We are creating jobs in every corner of the state. However, poor wages reflect a lack of investment in this workforce, and the failure to look at these workers through an economic development lens represents a failure if New York to invest in the jobs that lower income New Yorkers, especially women of color, rely on - jobs that immediately invest back in local economies through food, rent, and other necessities. The rural workforce study is currently in the health budget, but this is why we urge the legislature to fund it through economic development.

I also urge the legislature to coordinate health and workforce development funding to establish the Home Care Jobs Innovation Fund, which would fund pilot projects that test job supports that impact worker recruitment and retention. This fund would identify strategies in addition to training that attract and keep workers in the field, such as innovative methods for finding the right applicants, new hire orientation strategies, or novel worker investments (e.g., transportation fund, scholarship program, or retention bonuses). The findings of these pilot projects would help the state craft a comprehensive strategy to address the home care workforce shortage. Now is the time for the state to step up and lead in this area. We look forward to working with you in the weeks and months ahead to invest in New York's vital home care workforce. Thank you.