

My name is Stanford J. Perry and I am the Executive Director of AHRC Nassau and its affiliated organizations. I have had the pleasure of working in the field of developmental disabilities for over 30 years, starting as a DSP and now serving as an Executive Director for several decades. I would like to start by thanking Senator Carlucci and the Senate Standing Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities for convening this Public Hearing on OPWDD's Transition to Managed Care.

AHRC Nassau and Citizens Options Unlimited have been an integral part of Partners Health Plan since its inception of the pilot program in 2014. Since that time hundreds of families have chosen PHP as their provider of managed care services. With over 400 people enrolled, we represent the largest single group of stakeholders from any organization currently participating in Partners Health Plan. Our number of plan participants continues to grow for one reason and that is the high quality of coordinated supports and services each person receives from Partners Health Plan

Moving to the next level in preparation for managed care is not only important to those enrolled, but also to the thousands who are not yet enrolled. Release of the SIP-PL application sends a strong message about the partnership that exists between government, the provider sector and families to ensure cost-effective, coordinated services with less duplication of effort. The availability of an expanded array of services now enjoyed by those enrolled in PHP should be made available on a State-wide basis.

Why AHRC Nassau and Citizens Options families chose PHP?

- **Not all providers have trained clinical staff working with individuals on a daily basis.**

PHP is led by experienced providers of developmental disability services and offers at the core of its service plan a two-person care team with a Care Manager who is either a SW or RN. This clinical expertise helps the team navigate hospitalizations, rehabs, and discharge planning. This person-centered approach supports individuals to live the life they choose.

- **Many families are afraid to change plans because they fear they won't be able to keep their doctors.**

PHP has a broad range of providers in our area, with assistance to make the proper connections when utilizing a new provider. PHP has a very large hospital network on Long Island, so our plan participants are guaranteed the level of medical care and treatment specific to their individual needs. In cases, where a change in physician or specialist has been warranted, PHP's extensive network has once again made such transitions easy and seamless. However, this is rare, as the majority of people enrolled are able to retain their primary care physicians and other specialized medical professionals.

- **Many plans are not using the most advanced technology available.**

PHP has introduced a telemedicine program in several of our IRAs. This technology has made it easier to obtain on in-time response to medical concerns, diagnosis, and follow-up, which has resulted in reduced unnecessary ER visits. Given the ongoing reductions in Medicaid spending and the projected deficits, this cost effective option has proven to be essential to staff and the people we support. The ability to diagnose and treat in place saves countless numbers of hours in a waiting room and helps to keep the residential staff in the home to support their housemates.

- **Not all plans concentrate solely on the I/DD community.**

Person centered services is a key component of the PHP brand. As the first insurance plan in the country exclusively dedicated to serving persons with I/DD, its success is driven by its ability to encompass both medical and all waiver services, integrating services and considering the “whole” person. Its history as an I/DD only service provider gives families and individuals the assurance they need to know that their concerns, issues, and challenges will be understood and attended to by professionals who have dedicated their careers to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

- **With many plans, there is a long wait to obtain needed services.**

Another key element of PHP’s success is the reduction of wait times for services. Eliminating the “front door” as a gateway to obtain services is an option that families and individuals find extremely valuable. The expedited approval of self direction budgets has resulted in weeks before enrollment, instead of several months.

- **Many plans offer limited services.**

The transportation program for people living at home or independently to ensure community integration, medical appointments, shopping etc. has been prime for people seeking to live lives that are more independent.

The PAL program, which links people supported to people with similar interests in the community, has had a very positive impact. Creating pathways for people with IDD to expand their social and personal networks enriches their lives.

In addition a high quality formulary, ease of approval for medications and durable medical equipment, and no cost sharing, like deductibles/co-payments/co-insurance, makes PHP the best choice for our families who have chosen this option.

I could go on and on extolling the virtues of PHP and the success that AHRC Nassau has experienced. We all know that coordinated services and quicker access reduces anxiety and

clears a broader path for inclusion and independence. That is easy for me to say, but I would like to share the thoughts of individuals and families, currently participating in the program:

Jessica Campbell, a self-advocate and member of the AHRC Board of Directors states that:

PHP has made a big difference in my life and enhanced self-direction. Because of PHP, I have supports I would never have gotten through Medicaid to go from my home to work to even the grocery store. I would not be able to get into the community without PHP. For example, without PHP, I would not have a spare walker — which can take five years for approval. If my walker was to break, I could not leave my home. Without PHP, I would not have para-transit, the bus that picks me up and takes me to work. Without PHP, I would not have massage therapy, the gel liner for my bed, my back support tool to sit and stand, or my toilet raiser and shower chair to move confidently in the bathroom. PHP helps me to be independent. I have my own home. I am proud to live alone, but I do need help sometimes. My care coordinator, Gerald Giuliano, recently supported me when Social Security made a mistake with where to send my checks. This situation could have cost me my home and my ability to pay bills, including my electricity and Internet package, which includes my phone. I appreciate Gerald's support in straightening out the issue. Without PHP, I would not feel confident to live alone and go out and be a part of the community.

Michelle Rudoff, another self-advocate and self-advocacy trainer states that:

PHP has given me more independence. I am confident getting to and from the doctor. I go by myself. PHP helped me get rides; they also helped me find a closer dermatologist, after they found out I was going about an hour away and then waiting 2-3 hours for a ride on the way back. I am happy to work with them.

Janice Shear, the mother of an individual who is enrolled in PHP states:

My daughter, Meredith, has been a part of PHP since its inception. It is so comprehensive, and puts Meredith in charge of her own healthcare. A few of her providers became part of the PHP panel and joined just for her. Meredith has a clear voice at her life plan meetings and makes all her own decisions. Her care coordinator and case manager are very helpful and always available to her. She is very happy with PHP and as a parent, so am I.