



CONSUMER DIRECTED ACTION OF NYS

BUILDING SELF-DIRECTED POWER

Do Not Cut CDPA Worker Wages

Governor Hochul's elimination of supplemental wages and benefits for workers in the state's consumer directed personal assistance program (CDPAP) is misdirected, harming workers and the disabled and older New Yorkers they serve while achieving no discernible policy goal. These changes would only serve to further destabilize the state's precarious long-term care system, causing existing workers to flee the sector leaving the disabled and older consumers who rely on them without services. It would also harm the agency-based home care program, as history shows that plans will work with unscrupulous agencies to switch cases to CDPA, lowering worker compensation while they and the plan profit.

Wage parity was implemented in 2012 as a way to ensure stability and quality as the state moved into a managed care environment. CDPA was added to the requirement in 2017 because the program's exclusion served as a loophole to the requirement, destabilizing the entire sector. Managed care plans colluded with home care agencies that also provided FI services to shift existing personal care cases to CDPA, in many instances without the consumer's knowledge. The plan saved money through lower reimbursement costs while the agency saved money by not having to pay wage parity, not having to provide nursing supervision, and being able to forego several other regulatory barriers not necessary in CDPA due to the consumer's control.

Even with the addition of CDPA to wage parity, the program has not been immune to the challenges of the workforce crisis. While the ability to hire family lessens the harm for some, not all consumers have family to do the work, and even some who do have family need other workers to staff all their hours. This, combined with the Legislature's recognition that this vital workforce of primarily Black, LatinX, and immigrant women has been historically undervalued and subject to systemic discrimination, led to wage increases of \$2.00/hr. in 2022, with another \$1.55/hr increase on January 1, 2024. **If this proposal were enacted, it would create the lowest wage and benefit package for these workers since January 2020, undoing two years' worth of Legislative efforts to increase their pay.**

Despite across-the-board wage parity cuts last year that effectively made home care workers pay for their own wage increase on January 1, the Legislature's work in raising wages appears to be having at least a small impact. This wage parity cut for CDPA would undo all of that progress, and make the situation worse than it was before we started. PAs' total compensation would be less than it was in January 2020.

This would send a clear message to CDPA home care workers only that the state does not view them as essential. It would deem them "second-class" home care workers, worth less than their peers in agency-based home care. This despite the fact that in CDPA, workers often perform higher-level services that agency-based staff are not legally allowed to perform.

Abolishing wage parity for PAs is nonsensical, dangerous, and destabilizing to the entire sector. It perpetuates a long history of balancing the budget on the backs of disabled and older adults' ability to receive services and perpetuates policies that have led to the systemic oppression of this primarily Black, LatinX, and immigrant women workforce. **It must be rejected.**