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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **STUDY HIGHLIGHTS DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE NEEDS**

*Study shows increases in Direct Support Professional Wages, staff turnover and open positions*

**HARRISBURG, PA (January 23, 2019):** Seven associations representing community intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) services providers released a study today that provided data about the 2017/18 Fiscal Year Compensation for Direct Support Professional and Frontline Supervisor workforce in Pennsylvania.

The study, titled “2018 Pennsylvania Direct Support Professional and Frontline Supervisor Compensation Study,” found that the average Direct Support Professional hourly wage increased from \$11.89 in 2016 to \$12.83 in 2018. The wage increase comes as a result of successful advocacy and action by Pennsylvania Government officials in the 2017/18 Fiscal Year when Intellectual Disability/Autism services received the first rate increase in a decade. This investment from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania resulted in 90% of Direct Support Professionals receiving a wage increase.

It was not all positive news in the study, as both turnover and the percentage of open positions have increased from 2016 to 2018. Staff turnover rose from 26% to 38.2%. The rate of open positions increased from 11.9% to 20.4%. As such, the study notes that, “while advocacy efforts have been followed by increases in Direct Support Professional wages, hiring challenges continue to highlight the fact that the wages are too low. We have failed to reach an equilibrium between supply (Direct Support Professionals) and demand (the need to hire Direct Support Professionals).”

Dr. Scott Spreat, renowned researcher and the Principal Investigator of the study, said: “the data make it evident that even though wages have gone up, our system continues to be plagued by high workforce turnover rates and vacancy rates. It’s clear that with the current rate structure, Intellectual Disability/Autism services providers can’t compete with other businesses for talented, qualified workers. Workers often leave our field to pursue higher paying jobs elsewhere. The investment in the 2017/18 Fiscal Year is an important step forward. But as the study suggests, one shovel full is not enough to fill the hole.”

The study points out that unlike other privately owned businesses, providers of Intellectual Disability/Autism services can’t raise their prices to pay higher wages without additional government funding. Services for individuals with Intellectual Disability and Autism are funded primarily through the rates set by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This funding is matched approximately dollar for dollar by Federal Medicaid funds.

The study was conducted by Scott Spreat, Ed.D. Copies of the study are available upon request and can be accessed online [here](#). The study is a collaborative project of Moving Agencies Toward Excellence (MAX), PAR (Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability), Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA), The Alliance of Community Service Providers (The Alliance CSP), The Arc of Pennsylvania, The Provider Alliance (TPA), and United Cerebral Palsy of Pennsylvania (UCP of PA).

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### **ABOUT MAX**

MAX Association (Moving Agencies Towards Excellence) is a regional association of human services providers in Southeast Pennsylvania serving over 40 human service organizations in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties. MAX members collectively serve 35,000 individuals and their families, 6,500 direct support professionals and provide \$1 Billion in human services.

MAX'S mission is to assist the human service provider community to achieve excellence in the provision of supports and services. Please contact CEO Diane Conway ([dconway@maxassociation.org](mailto:dconway@maxassociation.org)) or visit [maxassociation.org](http://maxassociation.org) for more information

#### **ABOUT PAR**

PAR represents private providers of intellectual disability and autism services in Pennsylvania from every region of the Commonwealth. PAR's member organizations provide over \$2 Billion of the \$3 Billion community autism and intellectual disability services and supports in Pennsylvania and employ over 44,000 Pennsylvanians. PAR members provide the full range of supports and services to tens of thousands of children and adults with intellectual disability (including over 8,000 children and adults living with autism), in approximately 9,000 locations in the Commonwealth in addition to providing numerous non-residential and in-home supports. Please contact President and CEO Mark Davis ([mark@par.net](mailto:mark@par.net)) or visit [www.par.net](http://www.par.net) for more information.

#### **ABOUT RCPA**

With more than 330 members, the majority of whom serve well over 1 million Pennsylvanians annually, Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA) is among the largest and most diverse state health and human services trade associations in the nation. RCPA provider members offer mental health, drug and alcohol, intellectual and developmental disabilities, brain injury, medical rehabilitation, physical disabilities, and aging services through all settings and levels of care for individuals of all ages. Visit [www.paproviders.org](http://www.paproviders.org) for more information. Please contact Director of Communications Sharon Militello ([smilitello@paproviders.org](mailto:smilitello@paproviders.org)) or visit [www.paproviders.org](http://www.paproviders.org) for more information.

#### **ABOUT THE ALLIANCE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS**

The Alliance of Community Service Providers is a professional membership organization representing over 90 non-profit and for-profit organizations in Southeastern Pennsylvania that provide supports and services for adults and children with intellectual disabilities, those with mental health issues, and people recovering from addictions. Together, the members of the Alliance serve more than 200,000 people annually, employ tens of thousands and generate hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity. Please contact Associate Director Karin Annerhed-Harris ([karin@thealliancecsp.org](mailto:karin@thealliancecsp.org)) or visit the [www.thealliancecsp.org](http://www.thealliancecsp.org) for more information.

#### **ABOUT THE ARC OF PA**

The Arc is the largest advocacy organization in the United States for citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their families. The Arc of Pennsylvania is the state chapter of The Arc. In conjunction with its local chapters and the national organization, The Arc of Pennsylvania works every day to carry out its mission - to work to include all children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in every community. Local chapters of The Arc focus on providing resources and individual advocacy services. The Arc of Pennsylvania focuses on systems advocacy and governmental affairs, demonstrating leadership and guidance among all disability organizations in Pennsylvania. Please contact Executive Director Sherri Landis ([slandis@thearcpa.org](mailto:slandis@thearcpa.org)) or visit [www.thearcpa.org](http://www.thearcpa.org) for more information.

#### **ABOUT TPA**

The Provider Alliance supports agencies that serve people with intellectual disability and their families across Pennsylvania. We do this through collaboration, advocacy, innovation and information-sharing across our membership. With over 100 members, participating organizations have access to experienced colleagues to share information and experiences. The Provider Alliance strives to promote best practices, and workforce development to deliver safe, supportive, and compassionate services that are part of the fabric of our local communities. Please contact President Patrick DeMico ([PatrickDeMico@ProviderAlliance.org](mailto:PatrickDeMico@ProviderAlliance.org)) or visit [www.provideralliance.org](http://www.provideralliance.org) for more information.

#### **ABOUT UCP OF PA**

United Cerebral Palsy of Pennsylvania (UCP of PA) is a 501(c)3 organization and an affiliated chapter of United Cerebral Palsy. It is committed to advocating for the independence, productivity, and full citizenship of people with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. Founded in 1952 by parents and committed volunteers who wanted to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Pennsylvania, today it includes advocating for the civil and human rights of individuals with disabilities and for needed services and supports. The organization is a strong advocate for Family Support and Lifespan Respite Services. The member agencies of UCP of PA provide a variety of community based services to thousands of individuals through various public and private funding streams and their own community-raised funds. Member agencies provide services to children, adults and seniors with intellectual or developmental disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, and individuals with dual diagnoses. Please contact UCP of PA ID/A Coalition Representative Judith McCowan ([Judith.mccowan@ucpcentralpa.org](mailto:Judith.mccowan@ucpcentralpa.org)) for more information.