

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

A.1926 (Gonzalez-Rojas) and S.1683 (Hinchey)

The New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) leads Independent Living Center (ILC) efforts to eliminate physical and attitudinal barriers to all aspects of life and to fight for the civil rights and full independence of all people with disabilities. NYAIL strongly supports A.1926 / S.1683 which would amend the Public Health Law in relation to reporting of home care usage.

Personal care and Consumer Directed Personal Assistance (CDPA) are essential Medicaid-funded services which keep disabled people and seniors in their homes and out of nursing homes. These services make up a significant portion of the Medicaid budget, yet the Department of Health (DOH) makes little data available to the public or policymakers regarding personal care or CDPA. This bill would compel DOH to make essential data available to the public, policymakers, and consumers.

In recent years, the State enacted many significant cuts limiting the growth of personal care and CDPA. Yet, due to lack of data, both advocates and policymakers alike have been left in the dark regarding key data points and unable to assess and respond to claims made by DOH.

NYAIL administers the statewide Open Doors Transition Center program, which assists people seeking to leave nursing homes and move back into the community. Through this work, it has become plainly clear that people are unable to access personal care or CDPA services so they can move back home. For those living in the community, services can be precarious due to the lack of home care workers. As a result, many people are going without much-needed services, and are at risk of institutionalization. Yet, neither advocates nor policymakers have access to data to see the depth and scope of the home care crisis. Arguments made by the administration impacted key budget decisions, such as whether to increase wages for this sector, and by how much. Yet, the data they based their decisions on were not available to other stakeholders.

A.1926 / S.1683 seeks to remedy this by compelling DOH to report essential data quarterly and make it available on their website. This data includes:

- The number of people receiving home care by county, type of home care, and services authorized.
- The number of people receiving home care by specific public third party payers.
- The number of individuals who have been permanently transferred from home care to a nursing home or assisted living facility.

- The average number of hours of home care authorized across all recipients of home care during the previous reporting period by type of service, payer, and county.

The above data would provide much needed transparency to New York's Medicaid program. This data would allow stakeholders to better understand where the various home care programs are succeeding, and any systemic problems that need to be addressed. It would also allow policymakers to make better informed decisions during the budget process. Furthermore, the DOH already publishes similar data on their website regarding nursing homes, other Medicaid paid congregate care settings, and hospitals.

For all the reasons above, NYAIL urges swift passage of A.1926 / S.1683.