New York’s New Budget Could Be More Costly...In Many Ways

Governor Paterson’s 2010-11 Executive Budget includes a proposal that sets disability policy back and may violate the law. The Governor proposes that seniors and people with disabilities who need more than 12 hours of personal care services a day will be required to switch to another program, such as the Long Term Home Health Care Program (LTHHCP), the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Waiver (NHTD), or the Managed Long Term Care Program (MLTC). Targeting people who are the most significantly disabled, yet living in the most integrated setting possible is unwise and discriminatory.

As advocates, we are angry because personal care and, in particular, the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Services Program (CDPAS), is the least costly model for long term care in the state. CDPAS allows people with disabilities to take control of their services, (i.e. handling the scheduling and supervision of direct care workers themselves), while significantly reducing the cost to the state and ultimately reducing the state’s Medicaid expenditures.

The bill’s language is written in such a way that it appears as though there is no cut to hours; rather, once an individual exceeds the 12-hour threshold, they will simply shift to another model. But this is not true.

According to the Governor’s proposal, people who receive more than 12 hours of personal care assistance could be instead enrolled in the NHTD Waiver. However, the number of slots in that waiver is capped. Once it is full, no one – no matter how much they need the services – would be able to get them. A more immediate concern is that the process for enrollment in the waiver is full of barriers that have precluded the overwhelming majority of applicants from enrolling in the waiver since its inception.

Hovey Honored for Volunteerism

At St. Luke’s Cornwall Hospital’s annual volunteer recognition breakfast, CEO Allan Atzrott presented ILI Executive Director Doug Hovey with the Robert J. Rizzuto Award for outstanding volunteerism.

Mr. Atzrott thanked all hospital volunteers for giving generously of their time, talent and resources, with special recognition of Hovey’s “extraordinary leadership” and advocacy as invaluable assets to the hospital. Doug currently serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees.

“I learned the value of helping others very early in life, and it is a privilege to be of service to an organization dedicated to the health and well-being of our community,” said Hovey. “I take great pride in my commitment to this hospital, and hope that others are inspired to get involved.”

Allan E. Atzrott, SLCH President, Wilbur Higgins, Board of Trustees Chair. Front row (left to right): Fran Rizzuto Carton, Douglas J. Hovey, and Peg Rizzuto

Doug Hovey
Executive Director

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ILI Recognizes Board Members for Dedicated Service

The ILI Board bids a fond farewell to Maureen Crush and John Fracasse. Both have served the maximum permissible terms of 9 consecutive years.

Maureen is a vice president at Rider, Weiner & Frankel, PC. Her service as a member and Officer of ILI’s Board of Directors includes terms as Vice President and Secretary. Maureen has been instrumental in assisting Independent Living to create two new organizations, Independent Home Care, Inc. – dedicated to providing long term care services to elderly and disabled residents of Orange County, and IL Strategy Group -- a strategic planning arm that supports both Independent Living, Inc., and Independent Home Care, Inc. We are delighted that she has consented to remain on the Development Committee for which she has provided valuable fundraising guidance and direction over the years.

John is Assistant Vice President and branch manager at Orange County Trust. His service as a Board Member and Officer includes terms as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee. During his tenure, our organizational budget has grown substantially and his professional advice and guidance have been greatly appreciated. John has graciously consented to continue as a member of the Finance Committee.

“It would be very difficult for me to quantify the contributions that John and Maureen have made as Board Members,” says Doug Hovey, Executive Director. “Their energy, leadership, commitment, support and friendship have been invaluable, and we are grateful that they will remain connected with our organization.”

Provident Contribution Helps Change Dream to Reality

The Provident Bank Charitable Foundation has contributed $10,000 to help ILI purchase furniture, appliances and other equipment necessary to complete its new training center.

“How Independent Living has been working for many years to enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and in doing so shares the Provident Bank Charitable Foundation’s commitment to connecting people with opportunities,” said George Strayton, President and Chief Executive Officer of Provident Bank. “The new training center will strengthen that commitment and enable Independent Living to continue meeting the ever-growing service needs of seniors and persons of all ages with disabilities in the community.”

“It is so rewarding to see this long-envisioned training center finally become a reality,” said Doug Hovey, ILI Executive Director. “We now have the capacity and resources to provide assistive technology services to individuals with visual impairments throughout our region, and to provide a variety of training opportunities for our own staff as well as the individuals we serve. Provident Bank has been a great partner and supporter of our organization for a long time, and we are very grateful for their ongoing commitment to our mission.”

How You Can Help Independent Living

We want to ensure that our programs and services are here for your children and grandchildren. When considering your last wishes and preparing your Will, we hope you will think about making a bequest to Independent Living, Inc. Contact our Development Office for more information about planned giving.
ILI FAMILY SERVICES MANAGER IS A RISING STAR!

Congratulations to our own Family Services Manager, Shannon Morris, who was recently recognized as a Rising Star at the annual awards ceremony co-sponsored by the Orange County Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Orange, and Junior League of Orange County.

Nominees for the Rising Star award are individuals between the ages of 21 and 40 who live, work or volunteer in Orange County, and who exemplify good leadership in any sector of the business community. Shannon was nominated as an outstanding, dedicated leader who sets the bar for innovative services that assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their self-determined goals. At Independent Living, Inc., Shannon goes above and beyond the call of duty and takes a proactive approach to problem-solving. “Shannon sets a positive example and demonstrates respect for others,” said Stu Kessler, Director of Program Operations. “She believes in the dignity of risk, encourages everyone she works with to set and strive for their goals, explore new opportunities, and be accountable for their actions.” In her spare time, Shannon volunteers with The Make-A-Wish Foundation and at Green Chimneys, a residential treatment center and school for at-risk youth.

Kudos to Shannon on her accomplishments and this well-deserved honor.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE BENEFITS “ANGELS AMONGST US”

On Friday, November 13th the Mid-Hudson Regional Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC) at Independent Living, Inc., in collaboration with the Orange County Provider Coalition, presented a $500 check to the Orange County Chapter of the Down Syndrome Association of the Hudson Valley “Angels Amongst Us”

ECDC and the Provider Coalition jointly sponsor an annual Early Childhood Conference that brings together parents, child care providers, human service and early childhood professionals. Each year, from the proceeds of the conference, a donation is made to an organization that supports children with disabilities and their families. Angels Amongst Us is the recipient this year. Established in 1988, Angels Amongst Us is an information-sharing network that provides support to families of children with special needs.

“We are delighted that our annual conference provides not only a forum for the exchange of information among those most concerned with our children’s education, but also tangible support for activities that enhance the quality of life for children with disabilities and their families,” said Suzanne Tremper, ECDC Director and Chair of the annual conference.

The Orange County Provider Coalition is a group of professional individuals and agencies that provides therapeutic and educational services to children with developmental delays/disabilities. The purpose of the group is to exchange ideas, share information and improve the quality of services to children.

The Mid-Hudson Regional Early Childhood Direction Center at Independent Living, Inc. is funded by the New York State Department of Education, and provides free, neutral information, referral services and assistance for parents, foster parents and professionals concerned about the growth and development of children from birth to age 5.

Phone: (845) 565-1162 • Fax: (845) 565-0567 • Videophone: (845) 764-8384 • www.myindependentliving.org
Our Mission

Independent Living, Inc., a consumer-directed, cross-disability service and advocacy organization, is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities. Our vision is a barrier-free society with opportunities for all persons to achieve their maximum potential. Programs and resources offered by our agency provide needed support to individuals with all disabilities at literally every stage of life and include services in the areas of: Early Childhood Direction, Personal Attendant Care, Employment, Work Incentives Counseling, Education Advocacy, School-to-Adult Life Transition, Deaf and Hard of Hearing advocacy and support, Nursing Home Transition & Diversion Waiver, Traumatic Brain Injury and Medicaid Service Coordination, Access to Home, Long Term Care Planning, Mental Health Case Management, Bridger Services, and Peer Advocacy.

Save These Dates!

Thursday, March 4th from 5:15 – 6:15 p.m.
Open House & Tour at Independent Living, Inc.
Call (845) 565-1162 x242 to register.

Saturday, May 15th from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Assistive Technology Expo at SUNY Orange
For exhibit or sponsorship information call (845) 341-4323 or Email flo.hannes@sunyorange.edu.

Wednesday, June 2nd from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
5th Annual Early Childhood Conference
at the Newburgh Ramada Inn.
Call (845) 565-1162 x240 for more information.

Wednesday, October 6th
Accessibility Options Showcase
at Empire State Convention Center, Albany
For more information online: www.NicheNewsNY.com or call (845) 733-4476 or email info@nichenewsny.com.

From our Executive Director continued from page one

This initiative takes individual choice out, adds more bureaucratic hurdles, and will result in putting more people with disabilities in nursing homes. Since 1999, when the Supreme Court in Olmstead said that people with disabilities should receive services in the most integrated setting, we have worked tirelessly with the administration and legislature to develop a CDPAS model, where even those with the most severe disabilities can remain in the community and receive services. This sets the state back 30 years. Targeting cuts to programs that support people with significant disabilities who are choosing the most integrated setting (i.e. using CDPAS) is against the law and will add costs for the state -- just what the budget can’t handle!