



Mental Health Association in Michigan



Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute



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Direct Care Worker Wage Coalition Meets with Rep Outman to Advocate for Local Families

Lawmaker Indicates Early Support for Increased Funding

As the Michigan budget continues to move through the state legislature, State Rep. Pat Outman (R-Six Lakes) took time to meet today with advocates backing continuation of essential funding for Direct Care Workers.

“We very much appreciate the time and attention Rep. Outman is giving to this important issue,” said Sherri Boyd, executive director of The Arc Michigan. “His commitment to supporting Michigan’s most vulnerable residents and their families is a beacon of hope for those of us who care for and protect them on a daily basis.”

Michigan’s Direct Care Workers provide essential personal care, training, emotional support and respite to an estimated 100,000 Michigan residents with mental illnesses or developmental disabilities. Although these workers historically have been paid less than they could earn at a local fast-food restaurant or retail establishment, a temporary COVID-19 hourly wage increase has allowed them to remain on the job.

“To reduce state funding for these workers now would essentially amount to a \$2.25 hourly pay reduction,” said Robert Stein, general counsel for the Michigan Assisted Living Association. “We very much hope the temporary increase is made permanent, so they can continue doing the essential work our state needs—providing high-quality care and support to vulnerable residents and their families.”

As state lawmakers work to develop the FY 2022 Michigan budget and appropriate federal COVID-19 relief funding, Rep. Outman’s support represents an important step in the process.

“Rep. Outman’s voice is highly respected in state policy circles,” said Scott Schrum, CEO of Residential Opportunities Incorporated. “Knowing he is in our corner adds to our confidence that our legislature will work to do the right thing by supporting Direct Care Workers and the people they serve.”

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