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January 3, 2024

To our esteemed General Assembly Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today at the virtual public hearings about the 2024-2026 Budget!

I encourage the General Assembly to do what the governor has recommended and fund all of the priority 1 DD Waiver slots. Unfortunately, if we do not also address provider capacity, simply awarding those slots will not solve the problem of people being able to access services.

Consumer-Directed (CD) services give people the ability to choose how and by whom their services will be delivered. As of the end of 2023, unfortunately, these services have become unsustainable, with many providers closing their doors in recent years.

In order to make these services sustainable and build the CD provider capacity, the following things MUST happen:

- 1) The General Assembly (GA) MUST fund a significant CD provider rate reimbursement increase. CD services have not had a significant increase since the inception of the services in 2005. Do you know that the minimum wage in Virginia in 2005 was \$5.15/hr? Today it is \$12/hr, which is a 133% increase. Two years ago, the GA had temporarily given all DD providers a 12.5% increase. When it came time to make permanent changes, almost every other DD provider saw a much more significant increase, even more than the Burns & Associates (B&A) recommended 50th percentile rates. CD services though were left at the 12.5%. This is the only increase we have seen since 2005. Last session, we got bipartisan agreement in both the house and the senate to put our B&A recommended 50th percentile rate increase into the budget. During the course of budget negotiations, once again our rate increase was stripped out of the budget. We cannot function on 2005 rates! 12.5% is not enough! Please fund a significant CD Services Provider Rate Increase. Don't leave us behind again! Based on utilization eval during last session, cost to the state is approx. \$1.7M. Please see draft amendment on page 3.
- 2) Last year, the governor removed the requirement for state employees to have a degree. This significantly and positively impacted the state's ability to hire qualified people. Make the same change for CD service providers. We are competing with Walmart and fast-food restaurants for workers because our rates are so low. We cannot hire and keep people with degrees at these rates. The state imposed this requirement on CD providers in January 2016, but offered no rate increase at that point to allow providers to hire these educated people. Remove the degree requirement for CD Services providers just like you did for state employees last year. This language change costs the state nothing.
- 3) In order to reduce the administrative burden on CD Services providers, allow Routine visits to be done using video methods. This is just 1 of the 5 billable codes that make up CD Services. All other visit types would be in-person. Routine visits are done in between the in-person visits. Like CSB Support Coordinators are allowed to do telehealth visits in between their in-person visits, please allow Services



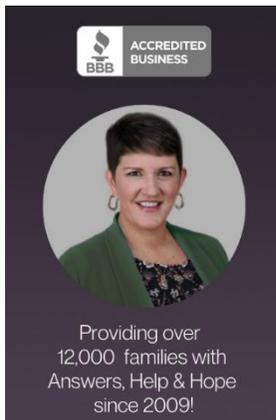
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Facilitators for CD Services to do their Routine visits in between other in-person visits using video conferencing methods. It would be less intrusive for families, less costly to employers (reduced cost of mileage), and less time consuming for employees (fewer hours on the road), making this position more desirable. Since we would still be seeing families in person at least every 6 months, there is virtually no risk to allowing Routine visits to be done using video methods for those that are capable. This language change costs the state nothing.

Thank you for your time consideration. I'm available for any questions you have or if you need more information. I will also be spending some time in Richmond this session and hope to meet each of you.

Sincerely,

*Joy Spencer*



**Joy Spencer**

Chief Executive Officer

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**Consumer-Directed (CD) Services – Service Facilitation Rate FIX  
DD Waiver Rebase – (50th percentile-Burns & Associates + CPI  
adjustment)**

DRAFT LANGUAGE – Governor’s Proposed Budget

Item 288:

WWWW. Effective July 1, 2024, the Department of Medical Assistance Services is authorized to update the rates for services based on the most recent rebasing estimates, and compounded using the Consumer Price Index, as follows: CD Management Training shall be increased to \$84.85 per hour in Rest-of-State and to \$94.53 per hour in Northern Virginia; CD Initial Comprehensive Visit shall be increased to \$339.41 per visit in Rest-of-State and to \$378.11 per visit in Northern Virginia; CD Routine Visit shall be increased to \$106.07 per visit in Rest-of-State and to \$118.16 per visit in Northern Virginia; CD Reassessment Visit shall be increased to \$169.71 per visit in Rest-of-State and to \$189.06 per visit in Northern Virginia; and CD Employee Management Training / Consumer Training shall be maintained at \$241.27 per visit in Rest-of-State and to \$313.65 per visit in Northern Virginia. The department shall have the authority to implement these changes prior to completion of any regulatory process to effect such change.