



Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Association of New York State

Create funding for an information line about CDPA

Since 2018, the New York State Department of Health (DOH), through the Medicaid Help Line, and its vendor Maximus, through New York Medicaid Choice, have directed anyone seeking information on consumer directed personal assistance (CDPA) or experiencing issues with existing CDPA services to a toll-free number purchased by the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Association of New York State (CDPAANYS). This has resulted in unsustainably high call volume to the Association, which lacks the personnel and resources to effectively assist, including with legally required mandates on language accessibility.

CDPAANYS established a toll-free line for consumers to call in 2014 as part of a grant from DOH to offer peer mentoring services. This number was terminated at the expiration of the grant in March, 2016. In 2017, it became clear that DOH was still referring people to this number. To fulfill the mission, we reinstated the toll-free number in 2018 at organizational expense; however, the resources that serving as the unofficial CDPA information line for New York demands are placing increased stress on our ability to meet demand.

Since January 1, 2019, CDPAANYS has fielded 4,755 calls from the Medicaid Help Line, New York Medicaid Choice, and New York Connects. This volume has resulted in considerable use of resources to the Association. Additionally, the state's requirement under Executive Order 26 to provide information in the state's top six languages cannot be met without resources, meaning language disparities that CDPA nearly eliminates programmatically prevent access.

In May 2020, CDPAANYS launched a Peer Mentoring program, which has equipped the Association with additional resources and staff to field informational calls and work with prospective and current CDPA consumers and families seeking information and guidance on the service. However, peer mentoring is primarily provided as a contractual service to clients, and calls coming in from the Medicaid Help Line, New York Medicaid Choice, and New York Connects cannot be given top priority. As call volume increases for those who are paying to utilize the service, a gap has been created in our ability to serve this population of callers.

With \$75,000 per year, CDPAANYS could supplement our current efforts and meet the call volume from DOH in a timely manner while also providing proper language assistance. Callers would have access to timely and accurate information about CDPA from trained peers. DOH, Maximus, and counties could maximize their resources and save time and money by repurposing any staff conducting this work now while those seeking assistance would receive the high-quality assistance from trained experts who also utilize the program.

The state must provide \$75,000 in funding to fund a peer-run information and help line for CDPA.