



Alliance for the Betterment of
Citizens with Disabilities

Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies

Context Counts

Response to the FY'24 Annual Report of the NJ Ombudsperson for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and their Families

In June of 2022, ABCD penned a white paper in response to the annual report of the Ombudsperson. We shared what we perceived as the most pressing issue, abuse, neglect and exploitation (ANE). Since the report did not educate on the prevalence nor ways to combat ANE, we conveyed what was and what was being put in place to help prevent, protect against, and prosecute ANE. We offered additional suggestions for consideration and asserted ABCD providers remain vigilant to protect the health and safety of individuals who are at greater risk and experience higher rates of ANE than the public.

The frustration we have with the annual reports is not with the important and often troubling information they relay, but when segments lack context. And if the contextual data is unavailable, the document should state as much.

Five points to provide additional context to the FY'24 report:

- The report talks about putting “administrative costs in perspective,” but fails to include that our rates were developed by a professional rate-setting organization paid for by the State of NJ. Also, it makes no mention that the rates for day programs and services were well below cost, because of the requirement that the funding be budget neutral.
- The report talks about “agency billing in perspective,” but does not make clear that we do not make the rules (We make plenty of suggestions, but we don’t make the rules).
- The report talks about “provider revenue in perspective,” but does not clarify that unlike contract based services, in the current Fee For Service model agencies are expected to use their retained earnings/profits to purchase, maintain and repair all vehicles, buildings, homes, and equipment; be able to effectively withstand adverse changes in the business climate without selling assets or borrowing; and supplement programs and services (mainly in day, see #1) for which the rates are below market, below cost, or not covered.
- The report talks about “executive compensation in perspective,” but does not include information on the total revenue of the organization which is also included on the IRS 990 form. Also, it fails to share that salaries are within the ranges published in salary guides.
- The title of each of the four sections noted above begins with the phrase, “Following the Money.” Was this intended to imply possible agency corruption?

We strive to work toward transparency to help our organizations in their efforts to build trust with individuals and families and to provide information that the community at large deserves.

October 16, 2024