



Alliance for the Betterment of
Citizens with Disabilities

Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies

FY 2026 NJ State Budget

All Individuals Receiving HCBS Waiver Services Must have Comparable Opportunities to Age in Place.

Make Speech Language Therapy Meaningful in DHS/DDD Day Programs and Services

\$544,128 State Share Requested¹

Many adults with IDD have complex and multiple body system impairments and limitations. Access to habilitative therapies which include physical, occupational and speech language therapies throughout their adult life helps to attain, preserve, and improve skills and functioning for daily living and full community participation.²

Despite 75% of ABCD's day programs reporting that habilitative therapies are desired and needed, only 12.5% can offer them because the Medicaid rates are a whopping 50% lower than the market rate – virtually meaningless.³

In addition, comparing the benefits between the HCBS Waiver Option for MLTSS and for DDD Support Program/Community Care Program, we found

Habilitative therapies⁴ are services in both MLTSS and SP/CCP. MLTSS is administered by MMCOs and has extensive provider networks. SP and CCP are administered by three entities with segregated duties; Medicaid,⁵ DDD,⁶ and community agencies.⁷ Regrettably, because the SP/CCP reimbursement rates for these services which are set by Medicaid is not competitive with market rates, most agencies are unable to hire and create a network of these licensed professionals, effectively making the provision of habilitative services to the aging IDD population prohibitive. The upshot is that unlike MLTSS with its extensive provider networks, eligibility under SP and CCP does not ensure service.⁸

DHS is to be commended for adopting a policy in the HCBS waiver that recognizes people with IDD as citizens, possessing an equal right to health care and related services and supports to enable them to age in place. Unfortunately, the rates in SP and CCP for habilitative therapies inadvertently perpetuate IDD's marginalization in direct contrast to DHS policy goal. For FY'26 we ask the State to begin to resolve this discrepancy by increasing the current rates for Speech Language Therapy.

August 28, 2024

¹ The increase would translate to a unit increase of \$11.51 for group and \$40.26 for individual Speech Language Therapy.

² ABCD Policy Paper. *Clinical Services and Day Habilitation*. August 2023. www.abcdnj.org

³ Ibid.

⁴ Under MLTSS the individuals must have a TBI or ABI. Under CCP/SP the individual must meet the functional criteria of having a developmental disability.

⁵ Medicaid provides the fee for service claims payment.

⁶ DDD provides agency onboarding, regulatory oversight, and quality assurance.

⁷ Agencies employ and oversee appropriate staff.

⁸ ABCD Policy Paper. *Aging in Place. Access to Habilitative Therapies Must be Ensured*. April 2023. www.abcdnj.org