



**Alliance for the Betterment of
Citizens with Disabilities**

Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies

Senate Budget and Appropriations/ Assembly Budget Committees

Testimony on the Proposed FY'26 Budget

March 19 and 26, 2025

Submitted by Cathy Chin, Executive Director

Good day, Chairperson Sarlo/Pintor Marin and members of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee/Assembly Budget Committee. On behalf of ABCD, thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts as you begin deliberations on the proposed FY '26 Budget.

The Murphy Administration and the NJ Legislature are responsible for groundbreaking policies and resources that ensure individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and delays can live, grow and thrive in the community.

I won't lie to you, after weeks of advocacy, watching solid Congressional No votes transform into Yes votes for a budget framework which potentially puts Medicaid at serious risk, was a tough thing to watch. It will not dissuade us, because the lives of people with IDD count.

Earlier that same day, a governor in his last year, facing a structural deficit and the risk of losing over 12% of federal Medicaid funding made responsible and moral choices, leaving the state with a 6.3B surplus while not putting the responsibility on the back of the people we serve. Instead of a possible 5% reduction DHS will see a 3% increase. If approved DSP/Supervisors will receive a CPI increase on January 1, 2026, the priority waiting list will be reduced by 318 individuals, the Early Intervention Child Find marketing program will receive increased funding, and DDD Community Providers and Early Intervention Providers will not have their rates cut –due in no small part to Commissioners Adelman and Baston and the civil servants who made it their business to exact savings wherever they could find them. Today, in NJ, we are not losing ground.

But one reason for these annual hearings is to give you an idea of how we are doing. ABCDs member agencies will continue to do good work. Their determination to better the lives of the individuals they serve is unshakeable, as evidenced by their responses to two recent crises – the EIMS fiasco and COVID. Could DDD Community Providers use an across-the-board COLA to keep up with inflation? Could Early Intervention Providers use a 2.5% increase to maintain and increase the supply of physical, occupational and speech therapists to keep up with increasing demand for services? Could day habilitation providers use a transportation rate which will adequately pay them for transporting people with no other option? Yes. If during your deliberations you find extra cash, I am certainly happy to suggest how you might consider spending it.

Thank you for always having our backs.