



Pay Fair for *My Care* Campaign Messaging

Elevator Speech:

Disability services are chronically underfunded, and the problem has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Nationwide, the healthcare industry is seeing a shortage of Direct Support Professionals (DSP). DSPs fulfill many critical roles. They build relationships and oftentimes provide around-the-clock care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. However, the annual turnover rate has reached a crisis level of over 50% and the workforce has diminished. Without the availability of these services, individuals cannot be included in their communities and may have to seek more costly institutional care to survive. Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families are asking lawmakers to Pay Fair for *My Care*!

Key Facts:

- Before the pandemic, the national average annual turnover rate of DSPs was already too high at 45%.
- According to the *Predictors of Annual Turnover Among DSPs* study out of the University of Minnesota, the magnitude of the DSP turnover rate is hardly ever seen in any other industry, thus making running an efficient and effective direct support program or business nearly impossible.
- Job retention for DSPs is about valuing people in the position. It's about increasing pay, commensurate with responsibilities, skills, and experience, as well as making sure that DSP concerns are heard and that they are responded to in a respectful way.
- DSPs are a lifeline for people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- DSPs are some of the most underpaid, undervalued professionals in our state. On average, DSPs make a little more than \$11 an hour nationwide—wages bound by state and federal funding.

Recommendations:

- FDDC supports increasing DSP rates for iBudget services. Wages for the DSP workforce should be increased to levels commensurate with a livable wage.
- Florida should continue investing in smaller community settings to provide services and supports. Investing dollars to support non-institutional care in smaller settings minimizes turnover as compared to larger settings.
- Florida should continue investing in the sustainability of Medicaid-funded home and community-based services. This investment should address efforts to include workforce shortages and retention challenges.