



Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

KERRY A. DELANEY
Acting Commissioner

January 1, 2016

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable John J. Flanagan
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Room 330, State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker, New York State Assembly
932 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248

As you know, the 2014-15 State Budget directed the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to undertake a comprehensive study of a direct support professional (DSP) and frontline supervisor (FLS) credentials that would include: 1) national and international models of DSP and FLS credentialing; 2) career ladders for DSPs and FLSs; 3) a study of current DSP salaries and requirements; 4) classroom and on-the-job training requirements for DSP credentialing and their impact on service operations; 5) continuing education requirements for credentialed DSPs; 6) the fiscal impact of a credentialing program; and 7) the financial incentives for those who successfully complete the credentialing program.

Attached please find a report developed by the University of Minnesota (UMN) in conjunction with two provider associations, the New York State Association of Community and Residential Agencies (NYSACRA) and the New York State Rehabilitation Association (NYSRA) fulfilling this requirement. This report includes recommendations that OPWDD will consider as we continue to explore improvements in our service delivery to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

OPWDD contracted with UMN to complete the study and in turn, UMN subcontracted with NYSACRA and NYSRA as part of its effort. UMN, NYSACRA and NYSRA surveyed providers in the state on workforce practices and engaged focus groups to gather knowledge and interest from service recipients, families, direct support professionals, frontline supervisors, and provider administrators. They also completed a comprehensive national environmental scan on the topic.

Their findings, report and recommendations are included in the attached report. The depth of the credentialing study is extensive and the recommendations by its authors are substantial.

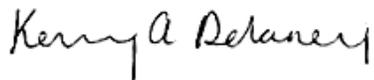
OPWDD agrees that a properly trained and appropriately compensated workforce is essential to providing the best possible service to New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities. OPWDD is continuing to

review various models, best practices, and recommended approaches, including those contained in the report prepared by UMN.

Additional dialogue is continuing with our service delivery partners on the scope of any new credentialing program, the interaction with other efforts to improve wages on a more uniform basis, and the level of resources that would be required to implement a program.

OPWDD looks forward to working with the Legislature, other State agencies, and provider agencies that provide services to vulnerable persons, in a collaborative effort to determine the path forward for the credentialing program and any potential additional resources that would be needed to continue to improve the direct support workforce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kerry A. Delaney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Acting Commissioner