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NC Department of Health and Human Services

Direct Care Workforce Update

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A Strong Workforce is Critical

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide care and support to people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities so that they can participate fully and meaningfully in their communities

Supports include:

- **Caregiving and support with activities of daily living (bathing, eating)**
- **Job coaching, employment support, and transportation**
- **Communication assistance and ensuring safety**
- **Providing emotional support**

DSP Supports also allow parents/families of people with IDD to work, engage in community

A Current Look at NC's Workforce

- **DSPs have a turnover rate of ~33%**
 - Half of DSPs leave their jobs within 36 months
- **Over 90% of all direct care workers are women and about 60% are People of Color**
- **Turnover hurts consumers and families**
- **We have an expanded benefit (Innovations, iOption) but need workforce now to meet service demand**
- **NC would need about 20,000 DSPs to meet the needs of people with IDD on the Innovations waitlist**

Important Work is Being Done to Care for the DSP Workforce

NC Budget includes:

- **\$176 million for Innovation provider rate increases**
- **\$176 million for Personal Care Services**
- **\$17.9 million to establish a Behavioral Health workforce training center**
 - **Some of which can support career pathway activities**

Current Challenges Supporting the Workforce

- **Rate increases do not keep up with cost of living**
- **Recent legislation does not require a minimum wage or percentage of rate increase passed through to wages**
- **Training is inconsistent across the state**
- **No pipeline to create new DSPs**
- **Little opportunity for advancement in current system**

Recruitment, Training, and Compensation for the Workforce

DHHS is developing a comprehensive strategy that includes:

- **Career Pathway**
 - Recruitment campaign
 - Standardized training with tiers tied to career advancement
- **Living wage increases**
- **Incentives & employment supports**

The strategy includes partnerships with community colleges, providers, families, consumers, LMEs.