

! a message from **OUR CEO**

KIM CORNWELL
EPIC CEO

ACTION ALERT: TELL LEGISLATORS: DO NOT CUT DSP HOURS!



Back in April I sent out an urgent communication and hosted a Zoom meeting regarding the current issues the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) has in implementing corrected formulas related to the rates paid for services people with I/DD receive from agencies like EPIC. These rates are now scheduled to be implemented as of March 31st. The new proposed rates would impact 10% of total service hours across the state and remove \$87.7 million in funding for IDD agencies.

For EPIC specifically, we are projected to see **a reduction of 22,400 DSP hours, affecting 11 positions, and resulting in \$458,000 less in funding per year!**

As a result, EPIC and other agencies across the State continue to push for advocacy that may result in the retraction of IDHS's new calculations that will result in an unacceptable reduction of Direct Support Professional (DSP) hours. Without these critical hours we will see increased time spent on waiting lists along with reductions in provided activities and supports due to the increased lack of staff and current staff bandwidth limitations. This plan to reduce doesn't align with what's best for adults with disabilities. We are seeking your help! Let's make sure the Governor's office and our local Legislators understand how critically important our DSP hours and recommended funding by Guidehouse is to the wellbeing of people with disabilities.

Ways to Make Your Voice Heard!

1. Send one of our letter templates by mail or email using the contacts on the letter. It was created for advocates to easily communicate the urgency of insuring funds needed are not cut and in fact included in the Governor's presented budget on February 21st. You will also find versions of this letter on our website.
2. Join us in making calls to
Dulce Quintero, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services (312) 793-1547
Tonya Piephoff, Director of the IDHS-Division of Developmental Disabilities (618) 474-3800

Use the following script (pg 2)

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Phone Script:

"Hello, I'm reaching out to express my concerns regarding the reduction in hours for Direct Support Professionals. The adults at EP!C Services rely on these caregivers for round-the-clock support. There are deep safety concerns, and the potential impact is troubling. Cutting hours for these dedicated professionals would put our staff and individuals at risk, with potentially severe consequences. Please reconsider this decision immediately."

3. Share the letter template in an email with your friends and family encouraging them to also send the letter and make phone calls. Share how this directly affects you.
4. Share our advocacy posts on social media to help spread the word to your networks.

You can also visit our website for a list of legislative contacts to make calls and send emails and give them the same message as above. I'm available to answer any questions you may have. We once again appreciate you taking the time to strengthen EP!C's voice for the people we support. Together we can elevate the voices, strengths, and positive contributions of persons with disabilities.

Thank you on behalf of EP!C Individuals and Staff.