



Dear Friends and Colleagues:

As many of you know, Governor Cuomo has officially proclaimed the week of September 10-16, 2017 “Direct Support Professionals Week” in the State of New York. This annual observance provides us an opportunity to honor and thank the thousands of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who empower New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to lead full and rewarding lives, accomplish their goals and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

DSPs are the heart and soul of our service delivery system – working with, for and right beside the people who receive supports. They enable, help, and care. They provide encouragement, compassion and empathy. They develop personal relationships with the people they support – relationships based on mutual trust, esteem and respect.

In my estimation, there is not a nobler pursuit nor a higher calling than dedicating oneself to bettering the lives of others. DSPs epitomize the highest ideals of human services. To the approximately 130,000 people with I/DD enrolled in services in New York State, the dedication, devotion and dependability of their DSPs are more than important, they are indispensable.

This year’s budget, thanks to the Governor and Legislature, provided tangible recognition of the vital work performed by DSPs on behalf of our friends, neighbors and loved ones with I/DD by providing funds to increase the wages of DSPs working at hundreds of our partner agencies throughout the State.

Many of our provider agencies are holding events this week to recognize the outstanding contributions of their DSPs, and on Friday, I will participate in a statewide event to honor the outstanding DSPs who make valuable contributions to those supported by state operated services.

Irrespective of where they work, DSPs are united by their uniquely demanding yet indispensable roles. DSPs do much more than provide services and supports. DSPs give the people they work with the power to shine, the power to grow, the power to rise higher than others thought they could.

This week and every week, we recognize the special brand of compassion, patience, strength, humanity and skill it takes to be a DSP. This week and every week we convey our thanks and admiration to the extraordinary people we call DSPs.

Sincerely,

Kerry A. Delaney  
Acting Commissioner