

Governmental Affairs Update

Last month, The Arc of New Jersey testified at the Department of Human Services (DHS) Budget Listening Session about funding priorities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Held on December 5, the Listening Session was an opportunity to communicate with DHS Commissioner Johnson and senior members of her team about the Fiscal Year 2020 State Budget. As a member of the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage, The Arc of New Jersey focused our testimony on the ongoing Direct Support Professional workforce crisis. In addition, Executive Director Tom Baffuto spoke about the need to review and adjust the day program rate and he advocated for one-time capital funding to pay for costs that will no longer be covered in the fee-for-service system.

Also in December, legislation to create a New Jersey Caregiver Task Force to evaluate and provide recommendations on caregiver support services passed in the Assembly and was sent to the Governor's desk for his signature or veto. If it's signed into law, the Task Force will be required to identify existing caregiver support services available in the State; survey caregivers in the State in order to develop a summary of caregiver characteristics, and receive testimony from caregivers regarding the type of tasks performed, sufficiency of caregiver training programs, caregiving costs, experiences of caregivers in relation to support services, etc. The Arc of New Jersey is among the organizations who would serve on the Task Force to represent families of people with I/DD.