

[Crain's: 80% of disability care providers say cuts will result in their closure, reduced services: survey](#)

By Jennifer Henderson

The New York Disability Advocates—a statewide coalition of seven nonprofit provider associations whose members serve more than 140,000 New Yorkers with disabilities—last week released the results of a survey finding that 80% of responding health care providers for the intellectual and developmental disability community say incoming budget cuts will result in their closure or a reduction in services. The coalition surveyed a sample of agencies representing over 38% of the residential support system in the state.

Disability health care providers expect to take a nearly half-a-billion-dollar hit in total, NYDA said. That includes rate cuts related to people no longer in homes as a result of Covid-19 deaths and complications or other medical and therapeutic reasons. It also includes the withholding of 20% of revenues for a variety of programs that support families and individuals trying to live and work independently as a result of a broader withholding by the state to combat a pandemic-induced financial crunch.

"Before Covid, we weren't starting from a good spot," said Mike Alvaro, treasurer at NYDA and executive director of Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State. Before the pandemic, about a third of responding providers said they had less than 30 days' cash on hand. And in June that statistic had increased to more than 40% of providers.

The potential impact of cuts on thousands of individuals who rely on these providers' services could be devastating to an already vulnerable population, Alvaro said.

At the end of May a public notice was published in the state register that proposed vacancy rate cuts for residential providers. It was estimated that the proposal would generate an annual decrease in Medicaid expenditures of about \$100 million.

Alvaro said the proposal would force providers to try to consolidate so they don't have vacancies. According to NYDA, 55% of the providers surveyed reported it takes more than six months to fill a vacancy, and 20% said they are typically forced to wait longer than nine months to fill one. Some 20% also reported being forced to take beds out of use in the past four years.

The NYDA report further found that, should the cuts move forward, 39% of providers said they would close beds, 35% said they would close homes, and 56% said they would combine or consolidate residences.

Should a 20% withholding of revenue for certain programs not be restored by the end of the year, NYDA found, 30% of responding providers said they would need to close or discontinue services.

If individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities aren't able to get the services they need—residential or otherwise—it will have a negative impact on their physical and mental health and that of their families, Alvaro said.

"The Budget enacted by the legislature for this fiscal year required savings, and the state chose to preserve critical services to individuals rather than fund empty beds," a spokeswoman for the state Office for People With Developmental Disabilities said in a statement provided to *Crain's*. "In addition, as a result of the federal failure to offset the state's devastating revenue loss amounting to nearly \$63

billion over four years, we also have had no choice but to temporarily hold back a portion of state funded payments.

"We encourage providers and families to join us in calling on the federal government to act so the state can continue to fund critical services for New Yorkers," the spokeswoman added. —Jennifer Henderson