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January 6, 2022

Honorable Governor Kathy Hochul
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Governor Hochul,

On behalf of The Arc New York, our dedicated workforce, our families and the 140,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, we want to thank you for the commitment you made in your State of the State address to stabilize and strengthen our system of care.

We have long advocated for recognition of our essential frontline staff and sustainable investment in our field. For over a decade that call has gone unheard, and the neglect of our vulnerable population resulted in an escalating crisis that threaten the safety, opportunity, and future of supports and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The commitment you made in your address marks a turning point for our field, and a long-awaited and well-deserved recognition of care for New Yorkers with disabilities as part of our essential healthcare system.

We applaud your promised inclusion of \$2 billion to support healthcare worker wages and \$2 billion to support worker retention bonuses in your Executive Budget. This funding is urgently needed to address our immediate and unprecedented workforce crisis. The \$500 million COLA marks the first step in long-term investment in the sustainability of our care infrastructure, and the initiatives you outlined to professionalize the direct support role and create an employment pipeline will nurture a robust workforce for the future.

Thank you, Governor Hochul, for your understanding that “New Yorkers owe an endless debt of gratitude to our healthcare workers for all they have given us. It is time we start to repay them in a meaningful way.” Your commitment to our dedicated direct care workforce is needed, and your pledge to prioritize New Yorkers with disabilities in your vision for the state will lead us to a stronger and more equitable future for all New Yorkers.

With gratitude,



Dr. John Kowalczyk
President
The Arc New York



Erik C. Geizer
Chief Executive Officer
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