



February 14, 2019

Dear Lakes Region Community Services Valued Employees:

I am writing to you to answer some questions that come my way regarding direct support wages.

This is a statewide, and arguably, nationwide issue regarding how we value and compensate DSPs that are performing critical care services in challenging circumstances and with minimal supports. For progress to be made, you need to get involved. When I testify or write on your behalf, the perception is that I am advocating for “my” budget, not your best interests. While it is true that due to related increased costs in benefits and payroll taxes associated with any pay increase 100% of a rate increase is not guaranteed to be applied only to wages, you have my word that the intention of LRCS is for any rate increase directly benefit our employees. Not only is it the right thing to do, it is the only way we will be able to reverse the current workforce crisis and provide services to those who depend on us.

We also recognize that the mileage reimbursement rate is significantly under the federal allowable rate, and this, as well as wages and benefits, are annually the largest focus of the number crunching that goes into our budget. Every 1 cent we increase the reimbursement rate is roughly a \$35,000 hit to the budget. We are also facing health insurance renewal season with early projections including a significant rate increase (we spend the next few months diligently attempting to push back!)

All of this continues to be delicately “balanced” within a budget that for 13 years and counting, we know will not see an increase in revenue.

This year you have a chance to answer a call to action and directly impact those in Concord who will vote (or not) to increase the Medicaid Reimbursement Rate to LRCS. Please consider submitting written testimony to your legislators regarding the need for a rate increase and a move towards a living wage for DSPs. Tell your personal stories. They will have an impact. Stress that a 2.5% rate increase proposed in the Governor’s budget is better than nothing but remind them that it does not make up for 13 years of no increase and a stagnant DSP wage scale.

How do you write? First of all, no format is wrong. Just tell your story. The first bill relating to the rate increase is Senate Bill 308 <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/Senate/members/webpages/district02.aspx>. This bill calls for a larger rate increase than what is proposed in the Governor’s budget, 5% in the first year and 7% in the second. If you want to learn how to follow these bills, go to www.gencourt.state.nh.us and you can type in a Senate Bill (SBXXX) or a House Bill (HBXXX) and it will take you to a page with the status of the bill:

Find a 2019 Bill

Enter Bill #  (hb23,sb456)

[Advanced Bill Status Search](#)

▶ NH General Court
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NH General Court - Bill Status System
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Bills Found : 1



SB308 -FN-A Session Year 2019 Bill Docket Bill Status Bill Text[HTML] [PDF] Audio Files	Title: relative to the health care workforce and making appropriations therefor. G-Status: SENATE House Status: Senate Status: IN COMMITTEE Next/Last Comm: Senate Executive Departments and Administration Next/Last Hearing: 02/13/2019 at 12:00 PM LOB Room 101
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[NH House](#)

[NH Senate](#)

SB 308 will be heard by the Senate Finance Committee. A hearing date has not been set yet. District 2 Senator Bob Guida, who sits on Senate Finance, represents many of you who live in the northern part of our region. Here is a link to his web page: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/Senate/members/webpages/district02.aspx>. You can reach him directly at the email and phone listed.

To reach out to other Finance Committee members, under the www.gencourt.state.nh.us site you can click “Contact your State Senator” and at the top of the page it takes you to, lick “Committees” and then “Standing Committees.” Scroll down to “Finance” and you will see an option to “Email Entire Committee.”

Finance



Chairman Lou D'Allesandro
V Chairman Dan Feltes

Email Entire Committee



Cindy Rosenwald
Jay Kahn
John Reagan
Bob Giuda

When you click this, it will open an e-mail and pop all the committee members e-mail addresses in!

I know this might seem like a lot of information and steps, Karen McDowell, LRCS' Legislative Liaison, and I are always willing to take time and walk through this with you. I promise, if you do it once you will have it down!

If you would prefer to mail a letter to the Senators, you may also do so at the following address:

NH State Senate
Finance Committee
Attn: Committee Aide Deb Martone
Legislative Office Building Room 103
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Thank you for all that you do. Please consider helping us advocate for a rate increase and a living wage for the Direct Support Profession!

Thank you,

Becky

Rebecca L. Bryant
President & CEO