



## **For Immediate Release**

### 100+ Community Organizations Call on the NJ Legislature to Give Human Services an Annual Cost of Living Adjustment

100+ organizations have gathered together to say human services need an annual cost of living adjustment. A diverse array of disability advocates, social service providers, business groups, and trade organizations have signed the letter below urging New Jersey lawmakers to pass A508/ S2668 into law. Without the necessary investment, New Jersey's most vulnerable residents will see their vital services close.

#### Letter:

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the members of The Human Services Equity Coalition, urge you to support A508/S2668 and help pass it into law. The signers of this letter represent and/or serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), mental illnesses, and substance use disorders. This vital bill will annually index the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) state fee for service and Medicaid rates and contracts to sustain community disability and behavioral health programs. Without it, many of the programs that tens of thousands of New Jerseyans rely on will not be sustainable.

This effort could not have come at a more important time. A November 2022 survey by the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA) showed 31.4% of frontline clinical staff positions were vacant at responding organizations. Recruitment and retention efforts remain challenging. Nationally, the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) has shown that 63% of intellectual and developmental disability providers are discontinuing programs and services. In New Jersey, when DDD transitioned from contracts to Medicaid fee-for-service in 2016, the system only funded provider rates at 87% of costs for I/DD residential services.

The Human Services Equity Coalition (HUSEC) is a group of leading disability, mental health, and substance abuse treatment organizations across New Jersey working to sustain community services.

We are grateful for the substantial investments in staff and rates in the FY 2024 budget. This includes an inflationary 3.25% across-the-board rate increase for DDD services. We hope to keep this momentum toward fiscal sustainability for all human service providers by passing A508/S2668 into law.

This is money well spent, as using the savings from keeping individuals in the community is also a sound fiscal move for New Jersey. For example, a participant in an adult partial care behavioral health program costs taxpayers \$448/week versus the \$5,000 - \$13,000/week it costs for hospitalization. If these services were no longer available, it would stress an already strained social safety net by crowding our homeless shelters, prisons, and hospitals at a higher cost to the state's bottom line.

This common-sense bill has strong bipartisan sponsorship in both houses of the Legislature. It would not force the State to automatically provide a cost-of-living adjustment, but would mean the budget process would start with one in the proposal. That way, we can begin tracking where rates should be, provide more certainty for providers, and, most importantly, help those we serve. With that in mind, we ask you to post the legislation to the relevant committee agendas and into law when the Legislature reconvenes after the November election. We appreciate your anticipated support.

Contact: Matt Binder

Email: [mbinder@nj.easterseals.com](mailto:mbinder@nj.easterseals.com)

Phone: 732-812-6419

Address: 241 Forsgate Dr., Suite 200, Jamesburg, NJ 08831

Signed:

Diane Hutton-Rose  
Executive Director  
**21 Plus**

Pamela Ducklow  
Area Vice President  
**AbleLight**

Cathy Chin  
Executive Director  
**Alliance for the Betterment of  
Citizens with Disabilities**

Cynthia Wildermuth  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Abilities of Northwest Jersey**

Mohsen Badran  
President & CEO  
**ACCSES New Jersey**

Anthony DiFabio  
President & CEO  
**Acenda Inc.**

Paul Ronollo  
Executive Director  
**Advancing Opportunities**

Renee Agro  
**Agro Transition & Consulting,  
LLC**  
President

Michael Haggerty  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Allies, Inc.**

Nancy Good  
President  
Nicole Kudyla  
Associate Vice President of  
Behavioral and Health Services  
**Alternatives, Inc.**

Gabriela Burgos  
Director of Finance and Corporate  
Compliance  
**Anchor Behavioral Solutions**

Salvador Moran  
Executive Director  
**ArcMorris, Inc.**

John Mulholland Jr.  
Executive Director  
**ASAH...serving  
the private special education  
community since 1974**

Aaron Soto  
Executive Director  
**Association for the Multiple  
Impaired Blind (AMIB, inc.)**

Suzanne Buchanan  
Executive Director  
**Autism New Jersey**

Terry McKeon  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Avidd**

Toni Pergolin  
President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
Brian Hancock  
Chief Program Officer  
**Bancroft**

Barbara Coppens  
**Self-Advocate**

Cory Storch  
President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
**Bridgeway Behavioral Health  
Services**

Caroline Kiessling  
Assistant Director  
**Camden Supportive Housing**

Barbara Greenwald  
Chief Operating Officer  
**Center for Family Support**

Paul Kucinski  
Executive Director  
**Center for Humanistic Change  
of NJ, Inc.**

Serena Romero  
LPC, NCC, CEO  
**CGS Family Partnership, Inc**

Laura Walsh  
Executive Director  
**Children's Center of Monmouth**

Heather Simms  
Deputy Director of Peer  
Advocacy and Community  
Initiatives  
**Collaborative  
Support Programs of  
New Jersey**

Bernadette Griswold  
Executive Director  
**Community Access Unlimited**

Carmine V. Deo, MBA, LCSW  
Executive Director  
**Community Hope**

Svetlana Repic-Qira  
Executive Vice President  
**Community Options, Inc.**

Ruthann Furst  
Administrator  
**Community Psychiatric  
Institute**

Vera Sansone, LCSW  
President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
**CPC Integrated Health**

Royleta Foster  
Executive Director  
**Creative Living Support  
Services**

Terrell Myers  
New Jersey State Director  
**Delta Community Supports**

Joanna Miller  
Executive Director  
**Department for Persons with  
Disabilities, Catholic Charities,  
Diocese of Paterson**

Eric Eberman, M.S.Ed.  
Executive Director  
**Devereux Advanced Behavioral  
Health**

Brian Fitzgerald  
President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
**Easterseals New Jersey**

Christina Klimkowski  
Director  
**ECLC of NJ Pride Day Program**

Michael Decker  
President & CEO  
**Eden Autism**

William Hartley  
Executive Director  
**Elwyn New Jersey**

Lisa Coscia  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Enable**

Jennifer Rector  
Executive Director  
**Everas Community Services,  
Inc.**

Jacques Hryshko  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Family Connections, Inc.**

Liza Gundell  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Family Resource Network and  
affiliates: Autism Family  
Services of NJ; Caregivers of  
NJ; Epilepsy Services of NJ**

Glenn King  
Executive Director  
**Freedom House**

Darien Singhani  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Friends of Cyrus II Inc.**

Alicia McGrath  
Executive Vice President  
**Goodwill Industries of NY/NJ**

Jacob Johnson  
Program Director  
**Heritage Homestead Day  
Center LLC**

Pinkesh Patel  
President  
**HomeCare Therapeutics**

Jessica Buzney  
**IRON Recovery and Wellness  
Center**

John Winer  
Executive Director  
**J-ADD**

Audrey Winkler  
Executive Director  
**JESPY House**

Leslie Kornfeld  
Executive Director  
**Jewish Family & Children's  
Service of Monmouth County**

Andrea Steinberg, LCSW  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Jewish Family Services of  
Atlantic & Cape May Counties**

Linda Press  
Executive Director  
**Jewish Service for the  
Developmentally Disabled**

Stacey Seigel  
Chief of Staff  
**Homecare Therapeutics**

Patricia Carlesimo  
Executive Director  
**LADACIN Network**

Roy Leitstein  
President and Chief Executive  
Officer  
**Legacy Treatment Services and  
Community Treatment Solutions  
(CTS)**

Gail Tamirian-Mandeli, MEd  
Founder & Executive Director  
**Life Opportunities Unlimited**

Janet Lichauco  
Social Worker/Therapist  
**Lightened Heart Therapy, LLC**

Kendria McWilliams Chief  
Executive Officer  
**Maryville Addiction Treatment  
Center**

Wayne DePedro  
President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
**Mental Health Association of  
Monmouth County**

Carolyn Beauchamp  
President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
Barbara Johnston  
Director, Policy and Advocacy  
**Mental Health Association of  
New Jersey (MHANJ)**

Beth Caraccio  
Vice President, IDD  
Organizational Development  
**Merakey**

Shawn M. McInerney  
President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
**Midland Adult Services, Inc**

Toni Ryan  
Executive Director  
**Mt. Bethel Village**

Susan Eisenhauer  
Steering Committee Member  
**National Alliance on Mental  
Illness (NAMI) Essex/Passaic**

Gaye Korley  
President  
**National Alliance on Mental  
Illness (NAMI) Middlesex**

Matt Camarda  
**Advocacy & Public Policy  
Director  
National Alliance on Mental  
Illness New Jersey (NAMI NJ)**

Mike Roche  
Vice President  
**National Alliance on Mental  
Illness (NAMI) Ocean County**

Julie Donohue  
President  
**National Alliance on Mental  
Illness (NAMI) Union County**

Juliet Hyndman  
President  
**National Alliance on Mental  
Illness (NAMI) Warren County,  
NJ**

Jeff Feldman  
Director Advocacy &  
Communications  
**National Association of Social  
Workers - NJ Chapter (NASW  
NJ)**

Ralph Coloma  
Executive Director  
**National Institute for People  
with Disabilities of New Jersey**

Chelsea Martin  
Owner/ Supervisor  
**Navigation Support  
Coordination**

Summer Brancoccio  
President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
**National Center for Advocacy  
and Recovery, Inc. (NCAAR)**

Gus Loukas  
Chief Financial Officer  
**New Concepts for Living, Inc.**

Dr. Anthony Comerford, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer  
**New Hope Integrated  
Behavioral Healthcare**

Stefanie Rinaldi  
President  
**New Jersey APSE**

Michelle Borden  
Chief Executive Officer  
**NewBridge Services, Inc.**

Colleen Roche  
Chair  
**NJ Statewide Independent  
Living Council (NJSILC)**

Valerie Sellers  
Chief Executive Officer  
**New Jersey Association of  
Community Providers (NJACP)**

Debra Wentz, Ph.D.  
President and Chief Executive  
Officer  
**New Jersey Association of  
Mental Health and Addiction  
Agencies (NJAMHAA)**

Michele Siekerka  
President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
**New Jersey Business and  
Industry Association (NJBIA)**

Kimberley Higgs  
Executive Director  
**New Jersey Psychological  
Rehabilitation Association  
(NJPRA)**

Linda Czipo  
President and Chief Executive  
Officer  
**NJ Center for Nonprofits**

Elise Miller  
Director  
**Community Engagement  
Nonprofit Finance Fund**

Rachel Herrington  
Executive Director  
**North Jersey Elks  
Developmental Disabilities  
Agency (NJEDDA)**

Anthony Lucibello, MPA  
Executive Director  
**Northwest Essex Community  
Healthcare Network**

Derry Holland  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Oaks Integrated Care**

Isaac Manning  
Executive Director  
**Occupational Training Center  
of Burlington County**

Mary Jo Buchanan  
Executive Director  
**Ocean Partnership for  
Children**

Michele DeICorsano  
**Executive Director  
Our House**

Michelle Vernamonti  
Chief Executive Officer  
**PAFACOM, Inc.**

Chris Pegeron  
President & CEO  
**Partnerships for People, Inc.**

David Bishop  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Pillar Care Continuum**

Tara Chalakani  
Chief Executive Office  
**Preferred Behavioral Health  
Group**

Michael Santillo  
Chief Operating Officer  
**Prevention Links**

Neeta Das  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Progressive Comprehensive  
Services**

Ross Croessmann, MSW LCSW  
Executive Director  
**Project Live, Inc.**

Elizabeth Drobot-Blair  
Chief Administrative Officer  
**Quality Management  
Associates, Inc.**

Steve Bayer  
Executive Director  
**REM New Jersey**

Michael Carpino  
Executive Director  
**SEARCH Day Program**

Pauline Simms  
Chief operating Officer  
**SERV Centers of NJ**

Diane Riley  
Executive Director  
**Supportive Housing  
Association  
of New Jersey (SHANJ)**

Christopher Perry  
President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
**Spectrum for Living**

Ken Berger  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Spectrum360**

Jason Bintliff Sr.  
Executive of Strategic Initiatives  
**St. John of God Community Services**

Frank Adu  
Chief Executive Officer  
**The Arc Middlesex County**

Laura Gaffney  
Chief Marketing and Development Officer  
**The Arc of Cape May County**

Robert Angel  
Executive Director  
**The Arc of Monmouth**

Gregory Beben  
Chief Operating Officer  
**The Arc of Warren County**

Bill Heath, LCSW  
**Time to Heal Therapy & Counseling**

Paul Turso, MSW, LCSW  
Assistant Vice President, Behavioral Health and Youth Services  
**Volunteers of America- Greater New York**

Nicole Digiore  
Director of Behavioral Health Outpatient Services  
**St. Mary's General Hospital**

Kathy Walsh  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
**The Arc of Bergen and Passaic Counties Inc.**

Linda Lucas  
Chief Executive Officer  
**The Arc of Essex County**

Sharon Levine  
Senior Director, Governmental Affairs & Communications  
**The Arc of New Jersey**

Laura Williams  
Executive Director  
**The Arc, Ocean County Chapter**

Leslie Stivale, MA  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
**Triple C Housing, Inc.**

Daniel Lombardo  
President & CEO  
**Volunteers of America Delaware Valley**

Idy Judowitz  
Director  
**Temimos**

Thomas Mannion  
Executive Director  
**The Arc of Camden County**

Colleen Dennis  
Executive Director  
**The Arc of Hunterdon County**

Susan Luckman  
Associate Executive Director  
**The Arc of Union County**

Allen Samuels  
Executive Director  
**The PILOT Services**

Keith Kearney  
Executive Director  
**UCP of Hudson County**

Chris Nasta, Executive Director  
LeeAnn Wagner, Vice President  
Julia Tracy  
Teicia Gaupp, VP Marketing & Communications  
Paul Zeger , Executive Director  
Casey Riccardi, YPP Clinician  
John Kelly, Chief Financial Officer  
Jennifer Dunn, Chief Operating Officer  
Daniela Szatkowski, Clinician  
Sandra Weingart  
Shannon Reed  
Meghan Mecca  
Hibah Iqbal  
Emily Wood, Associate Clinical Director of Outreach

**YMCA of Greater Monmouth  
County**

Tara Augustine  
President and Chief Executive  
Officer  
**Youth Consultation Service  
(YCS)**