

For Immediate Release

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Research Partnership Finds Ohio Making Progress in Improving Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

Significant Attention Needed to Improve Employment Opportunities and to Ensure Adequate Workforce to Meet the Service Needs of Children and Adults with Developmental Disabilities

CLEVELAND, OH—May 8, 2023—A research partnership between Achievement Centers for Children (ACC) and The Center for Community Solutions worked with Rose Frech, a Professor of Social Work at Ohio University, to conduct a comprehensive multi-part review of Ohio’s policies related to persons with developmental disabilities. Among the findings:

- Ohio has significantly increased access to Medicaid Home and Community Based Services and the client waiting lists for services have been significantly reduced.
- While more individuals with developmental disabilities are engaged in community employment, concerns persist regarding “sheltered work” and subminimum wages that can limit independence.
- Progress is endangered by a severe Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce shortage caused by low wages; Ohio’s 2024 to 2025 budget provides the best opportunity to fix this problem by boosting state support to boost DSP wages.

Frech previously conducted a review of state developmental disability policy for Community Solutions in 2015, and these latest findings demonstrate improvement.

John R. Corlett, President of the Center for Community Solutions and former State Medicaid Director for the State of Ohio said, “We were pleased when Achievement Centers for Children approached Community Solutions about reviewing Ohio’s efforts to improve services for persons with developmental disabilities; while it shows significant progress that progress could come undone without boosting state funding to raise wages for direct support professionals.”

Bernadette Kerrigan, President and CEO of Achievement Centers for Children added, “We applaud the Center for Community Solutions and so many public and private agencies for the focus being directed on this issue. The children and families we are honored to serve need local

and state leaders to collaboratively work together to resolve the most critical issue facing us – the severe DSP workforce shortage. We must act now.”

ACC recently expanded upon its 83-year long service to children and adults with disabilities in Northeast Ohio by establishing a public policy and advocacy program. This new leadership role is part of the agency’s recently adopted 3-year strategic plan and is aimed at amplifying the voices of the children and adults with disabilities and their families.

Through this partnership with ACC, Community Solutions will be releasing other research papers in the months ahead. The next installment will focus on how COVID affected persons with developmental disabilities and the community providers who work with them.

Read the paper here: commsols.com/OhioDDsystem



The Center for Community Solutions is a leader in Ohio’s Health and Human Services space, focused on policy advocacy, research, and data analysis. Organizations in Northeast Ohio and statewide use this analysis to understand public policies that affect their work and develop advocacy agendas accordingly. Direct service organizations, funders, and policymakers rely on accurate data and analysis to inform their decision-making, which can impact all Ohioans.



Achievement Centers for Children serves children and adults with a broad range of disabilities and special needs including physical, developmental, neurological and emotional challenges. Our service model weaves together education and autism services; therapy and the Intensive Therapy Clinic; recreation, camp and sports programs; adult services, and family support/social work services. We provide services on-site, in homes, in schools and on-line via telehealth and remote learning. We empower children and adults with disabilities to achieve their greatest potential through holistic and family-focused services.