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Serving Children and Adults with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities for over 70 Years

August 26, 2022

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Chief Operating Officer

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Dear Individuals, Families, and AHRC Suffolk Team Members:

As a result of continued intense lobbying and advocacy campaigning in conjunction with provider associations that include NY Disability Advocates (NYDA), the InterAgency Council of Developmental Disability Agencies (IAC), the NY Alliance for Inclusion & Innovation (The Alliance) and the Arc New York, some additional progress has been made on a state level to try to combat the workforce shortage our field continues to face. Earlier this week Governor Hochul announced that the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) has entered into a \$10 million partnership with the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) to expand opportunities for professional credentialing for DSPs in the developmental disabilities field.

The agreement will help professionalize the DSP workforce and address worker shortages by providing access to three levels of DSP credentialing and frontline supervisor certification and will provide bonuses for participating DSPs, as well as reimburse employers for training hours undertaken by their staff. These steps are significant and necessary. We must recognize our dedicated staff who have committed themselves to those we serve, while also continuing to expand our workforce to ensure that those in our programs have the staffing and support they need and deserve.

OPWDD Commissioner Kerri Neifeld stated “Expanding access to this industry-recognized credential will improve the competence and skills of our workforce and ultimately increase retention rates. It will provide our dedicated frontline staff who have been working tirelessly to meet the needs of New Yorkers with developmental disabilities under tremendous pressure the professional advancement and career opportunities they so well deserve.” Combined with the impending NYS Healthcare Worker’s Bonus of up to two payments of no more than \$1,500 each for qualified titles predetermined by the State, along with the eFMAP bonuses that were paid over the last year, our hope is that these efforts will all go a long way toward addressing challenges in recruitment and retention.

These developments are another reminder that every voice counts. Every phone call or email sent on behalf of the people we support and our staff, counts. We are truly stronger when we have a louder voice. AHRC Suffolk continues to build our voice, with currently over 300 members—are you a member? Memberships begin at \$15 per calendar year. You can visit our website to quickly sign up [HERE](#). With each and every additional member, our voice grows that much louder! #InItTogether

I hope you find time to enjoy these fleeting last few weeks of summer. Our communities will be buzzing with back to school excitement shortly. Next week our Saul & Elaine Seiff Educare Center welcomes back their staff on August 31 and their students on September 1. We wish them, and all students and staff returning, a happy and fulfilling school year!

Stay well, stay safe and thank you for all you do,

Paul H. Torres
Chief Executive Officer

A chapter of



REGISTER TODAY! AHRC Suffolk’s Annual Superhero Run for a Reason 5K! Run, walk or roll with us on **Saturday, September 17 at 10:00am**. \$25 pre-race, **register by September 1 to receive a free t-shirt!** Register online by clicking [HERE](#) or visiting our website www.ahrCSuffolk.org