

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified crises that have long plagued the Medicaid-funded system of community-based disability supports and services. That, along with the fact that extant data do not account for the impact of the pandemic on the Medicaid system and the people it supports, led UCP and the ANCOR Foundation to envision the *Case for Inclusion 2021* as a blueprint for a fundamentally transformed system of community-based disability supports.

The fundamentally transformed system we envision:

- Delivers higher-quality outcomes to more people.
- Supports people with IDD in the community and in the places where they choose to live, work and play.
- Prioritizes long-term sustainability by taking seriously the need for deeper investments in community-based providers and the direct support professionals (DSPs) they employ.
- Deemphasizes cost savings in favor of meeting people's unique needs, regardless of the severity of their disability or the complexity of their support plans.

The reforms needed to make this vision a reality generally support one of three broad objectives:

- 1 Resources for addressing providers' needs triggered by the pandemic
- 2 Resources and innovations for supercharging the direct support workforce
- 3 Innovations for empowering providers to improve quality outcomes

At the state level, this means making permanent the regulatory flexibilities established in response to the pandemic, such as retainer payments, payment of family caregivers, and flexibility to deliver telehealth services and virtual supports. Additionally, state governments should take steps to strengthen the direct support workforce, including by (1) expanding eligibility criteria to attract a larger pool of qualified DSPs, and (2) pilot testing the viability of value-based payment models.

At the federal level, both Congress and the Biden administration can take meaningful steps to ensure the sustainability of community services. These steps are outlined in the table below.

The Biden Administration Should...	The 117 th Congress Should...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incentivize states to develop and implement a plan for addressing each component of the direct support workforce crisis.• Require CMS to include Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) under the equal access rule.• Target DSPs with the incentives established by the 100,000 Caregivers proposal.• Direct HHS to fund alternative payment model pilot programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate additional funding for the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund.• Ensure community providers have sufficient access to staffing, PPE and technology.• Compel the Bureau of Labor Statistics to establish a Standard Occupational Classification for DSPs.• Provide funding to incentivize the development of DSP pipeline programs.• Pass the HCBS Infrastructure Act.