

**House of Representatives Human Services Committee
The Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs: Proposal for
Performance-Based Contracting Waiver**

**Testimony by Judy Dotzman, SPIN, President & CEO
May 1, 2024**

Thank you Chairman Kinsey, Chairman Heffley and members of the Human Services Committee, I am Judy Dotzman, President & CEO of SPIN, a provider of lifespan services for people with intellectual disability and autism in Philadelphia, Bucks, Montgomery, Northampton and Lehigh counties. I thank you for the opportunity to provide our experience and viewpoint regarding what is needed to prepare for Performance Based Contracting. First and foremost, we believe that change and a re-design of the system is necessary and conceptually, we are aligned that a model driven by quality standards is a good one. I also support the Department's efforts through Performance Based Contracting, to enhance rates for higher quality providers who meet the specified criteria. In order to accomplish this, providers need additional information on the criteria and the resources available to help them.

However, to turn a huge system, 50,000 + people supported and their families, providers need concrete details to be prepared to meet next level quality standards.

To give you some industry context, let me take 30 seconds to describe the adverse financial conditions we've endured. I believe this will help you all understand why specific detail is critical while also providing you some perspective of why we are so grateful for the Governor's proposed investment of \$217 million to ID/A services. Providers have been struggling to keep our services running – we are experiencing a workforce crisis and huge deficits. Other businesses use the pandemic to describe a before and after story, but the Intellectual Disability and Autism industry has been experiencing this adversity, deficit for well over a decade. We've been hanging on a thread before the pandemic and the pandemic took a scissor and cut the thread. SPIN is currently experiencing over one million and a half dollar deficit and we have a shortage of almost 100 Direct Support Professionals to fill vacancies and to expand our needed services to provide support to those on the waiting list.

We have been provided a framework with limited detail regarding the Performance Based Contracting process and the elements included in the process. There is no doubt that significant resources will be required to reach high quality standards. Providers need to make investment in the areas to meet quality indicators. However, our services have had a lack of funding investment over significant years and providers have been left on their own to make these investments. SPIN has been investing in quality indicators on its own for years including our recruitment, professional development, career pathing, and retention strategies to name a few. We have been a member of the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP)

and actively engaged in their EBadge credentialing program as well as the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD) Certification Program. We see a return on our efforts and investment by increased recruitment and retention and highly qualified workforce outcomes. Our culture and work has placed us as a Top Workplace for 15 consecutive years. In addition, we have invested heavily in our Business Analytics/data management systems in order to be able to collect and report data. All of these will be requirements of Performance Based Contracting. There is an expectation and a trust that providers will invest and front load these costs to be able to achieve the highest levels of quality.

We need concrete details regarding the quality standards of the process.

We need to assure that this process reduces redundancy and oversight instead of adding administrative burden to an already overcomplicated/highly monitored system. It is critical that the Department be receptive and willing to make adjustments based upon the feedback provided from providers and other stakeholders.

We need an infusion of multi-year funding investment to be able to achieve qualitative system reform. People with disability need fully competent, highly qualified Direct Support Professionals that are paid a living wage to support people to live their best life in the community and for their families to have relief from the stressors of lifelong caregiving and the haunting worry of what will happen to their loved one after they are no longer here. The critical shortage of qualified Direct Support Professionals puts people with intellectual disability and autism and their families at great risk for harm

Governor Shapiro sees the need for investment in our services – his budget proposal will begin to address the financial resources necessary to pay for the ramp up investment to achieve high quality standards. We need this funding for ID/A services to be an accepted piece of the budget, protected and not touched.

Quality has been and continues to be a hallmark of SPIN and its services. We need to assure a successful transition to a new model/system that does not cause disruption for the people we support, their families, and the people and resources providing the support. We need to assure that providers are fully prepared being in the know, partnering hand in hand to achieve these quality standards.

Thank you for this opportunity.