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ANCOR Releases Results of National Direct Support Workforce Wage Survey *Federal Legislation Introduced to Help Close the Wage Gap Between Public and Private Providers*

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia – The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) today released the results of a national survey that clearly illustrate the growing need for increased federal funding for low-wage workers who provide supports to people with disabilities. The [2008 Direct Support Professionals Wage Study](#), which was conducted in partnership between ANCOR and the Mosaic Collaborative for Disabilities Public Policy and Practice, imparts a sobering view of a national healthcare workforce in crisis.

Direct Support Professionals (DSP) provide “hands on” daily supports, training and habilitative services to persons with developmental and physical disabilities. Analysis of survey results compared wages among DSPs employed by private providers with those who work for state-run programs.

The national average starting wage for private provider DSPs in community programs is \$8.53 per hour, compared to the average starting wage of \$12.13 for state-employed DSPs – representing a 42 percent difference. Annualized, the average entry wage for a private provider DSP falls just short of the federal poverty level as the private DSP entry wage is \$17,744 compared to the federal baseline (for a family of three) at \$17,600.

“The wage disparity among private and public DSPs is startling,” said Renee Pietrangelo, CEO of [ANCOR](#). “As demand for the supports provided by DSPs grows exponentially, low wages will prevent private providers from attracting and retaining a qualified workforce.”

The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) projects a 49 percent increase in the number of direct care positions that will be needed between 2006 and 2016. This problem is compounded by the fact that the workforce is almost entirely funded by the Medicaid program.

“Without an increase in dedicated Medicaid funds from the federal government to the states, wages for DSPs working in the community will continue to stagnate,” said Peter Kowalski, president of ANCOR. “Coupled with the growing number of Americans who are projected to need the critical supports provided by DSPs, we are witnessing a healthcare crisis of significant proportion.”

Legislation introduced in the 111th Congress addresses the workforce wage issue. Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA) and Rep. Lee Terry (R-NE) have sponsored [H.R. 868](#), a bill to amend the Social Security Act to provide funds to states to enable them to increase the wages paid to targeted direct support professionals who are providing services to individuals with disabilities under Medicaid. There is no federal mandate for participation, but states that choose to participate will realize pay parity between private and public direct support professionals.

About ANCOR

The [American Network of Community Options and Resources](#) is a national association representing more than 850 private providers of community living and employment supports and services to more than 400,000 individuals with disabilities. As a nonprofit organization, ANCOR successfully addresses the needs and interests of private providers, which employ nearly a half million DSPs, before Congress and federal agencies, continually advocating for the crucial role private providers play in enhancing and supporting the lives of people with disabilities and their families. Through the [National Advocacy Campaign](#), ANCOR seeks to obtain the resources to recruit, train and retain a sustainable direct support workforce.