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March 11, 2021

Governor Jay Inslee
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

I am writing from The Arc of Washington State to highlight the 10 percent Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) dedicated to expanding and strengthening Medicaid Home and Community-Based services that was included in the recently passed American Rescue Plan.

As you know this system has been under tremendous stress during the pandemic: providers have shut down programs, workers have been laid off, people with developmental disabilities haven't had the supports they need, and their families have been left to fill the gaps.

The law includes clear language around how the new funds must be used. Specifically, the law requires states to use the funds to **"supplement, and not supplant, the level of State funds expended for home and community-based services for eligible individuals through programs in effect as of April 1, 2021."** The state is not allowed to make any decisions that limit funding or eligibility for these services and funds must be invested so that the state can maintain and grows its offering of community services.

It will be important that these funds are used to strengthen the program as directed by Congress. The original legislation that included the 10 percent bump, *The COVID HCBS Relief Act*, included a list of allowable uses for the funding. States should look to that list as they make decision. The list includes: **1) increasing direct care worker wages, 2) paying for transportation expenses to and from the homes of those being served, 3) purchasing personal protective equipment for workers and those they are supporting, and 4) providing hazard pay. The extra dollars also can be used to support family care givers, recruit and train additional direct care workers and for technology to facilitate services.** Finally, the funds can **help provide services for individuals on the HCBS waiting lists.**

As we continue to combat and recover from the pandemic, we also want to ensure that the needs of the developmental disability community are at the forefront of your planning when allocating the additional Federal dollars provided to our state in the American Rescue Plan.

In the face of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Federal government has provided unprecedented funding to state governments to support programs impacted by the virus. It is critical that our state address the urgent needs of the disability community during this crisis.

During the course of the pandemic, the entire Medicaid program has been under unprecedented strain and it is imperative that in addition to the dedicated funding from the Federal government the state also makes investments to build infrastructure and capacity in the HCBS system. It is not

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

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sufficient to just get the system back to baseline. This is a critical opportunity to build the HCBS system to support all people who need home and community-based supports and services.

We look forward to working with your office and we are willing to be a resource as the state continues to support access to Medicaid HCBS.

Sincerely,

Stacy Dym

Stacy Dym
Executive Director

cc:

MaryAnne Lindeblad, Director Washington Apple Health

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