

**ANCOR NATIONAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN RELATED TO:  
INCREASED FUNDING AND RECOGNITION FOR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

**November 2003**

**BACKGROUND**

Presently, the nation is facing a crisis-level workforce shortage in the health and human services profession, particularly as such relates to the direct support professional position. Recruitment and retention challenges have plagued providers for several years now and are only predicted to increase. These challenges equate to high staff turnover and increased costs related to staff training, overtime, and advertising. More importantly, these challenges undermine the expansion of community integration and result in lack of continuity and quality in not only service delivery, but in assuring stable and meaningful relationships for the persons receiving the services.

The crisis is the result of many factors including: 1) lack of adequate reimbursement to compete in today's labor market 2) an increased demand for long term care supports, and 3) the traditional labor supply not keeping pace.

**STATISTICS**

Nationally, turnover rates in this position range from 40% to 75% with the average median wage for the position at about \$7.97/hour (median wage of all U.S. workers is \$11.87). *(Excerpt from the September 24, 2002 ANCOR Press Release on this same subject.)*

In Texas, providers are reporting turnover rates in the direct support professional position anywhere between 45% to 100% and more. Note: Based on a sample survey conducted by PPAT in June 2002, the average turnover rate for the direct support professional position in the private sector was 62.22%; weighted, the average was 72%. As of November 2003, providers have seen little change in these rates.

Concerning wages for this position, as of September 1, 2003, the ICF/MR reimbursement methodology supports a modeled wage rate of \$7.57/hour and in HCS/MRLA a modeled wage rate of \$7.25/hour. In Texas state schools the starting wage rate for these same positions is about \$8.87/hour and in some schools even higher.

**ACTION**

In response to the workforce shortage, various entities have initiated plans to attain resolution to this most critical matter. These entities and their plans are:

- **ANCOR** (The American Network of Community Options and Resources - the national association for private providers) has established a national advocacy campaign to address the workforce and funding issues that are jeopardizing the stability and quality in community services.
- **PPAT** included the workforce shortage issue as a priority on its platform during the 78th Texas Legislative Session and will include it on its platform for the 79th Session.
- **The Community Services Legislative Coalition**, a group of 11 Texas provider and advocacy entities which advocates for funding on the state level for services to persons with mental retardation and mental health challenges, has also included this issue as a priority.

**ACTION OUTCOMES**

Resultant from the efforts of ANCOR's National Campaign, in September, 2002, U.S. Representatives Pete Sessions (R-TX) and Lois Capps (D-CA) introduced House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 477- the Direct Support Professionals Recognition Act. In brief, the resolution ***expressed the sense of the Congress that community inclusion for individuals with mental retardation or developmental disabilities is at serious risk because of the crisis in recruiting and retaining direct support professionals, which impedes the availability of a stable, quality workforce.*** Although this critical resolution did not attain passage at that time, ANCOR continued its pursuit for achievement and in a major recent victory, the Direct Support Professional Recognition Resolution (DSPRR) was approved in both houses of Congress. The Senate approved the DSPRR, Senate Concurrent Resolution 21, by unanimous consent on October 22, 2003; the House approved House Concurrent Resolution (HCR)

94 by a record vote of 382 to 0 on November 4, 2003.

Click [HERE](#) to view Resolution.

### **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

The importance of this victory cannot be underestimated. The fact that the House passed the resolution by a recorded vote with no opposition speaks volumes as to the support for this initiative and the over 310,000 persons who perform this vital role everyday. Moreover, by passing the DSPRR, the U.S. Congress took an unequivocal stance that community inclusion and enhanced lives for people with disabilities are at serious risk because of the crisis in recruiting and retaining direct support professionals and opened the door for further action to secure a strong, stable, quality workforce of support services for people with disabilities. The resolution's goal is to advance the nation's commitment to community integration and personal security for people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities and their families.

### **ANCOR's NATIONAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN**

ANCOR, which represents and advocates on behalf of the more than 800 providers of services and supports for 365,000 Americans with disabilities, is dedicated to raising federal and public awareness about the workforce crisis threatening community-based supports and services. Its National Advocacy Campaign is working to effect public policy that would make direct support compensation more competitive with other industries, thus enabling providers of support services to build a quality, stable workforce.

The following are links to find more detailed information regarding the Campaign:

- A campaign video and public service announcements that summarize the essence of this workforce crisis can be viewed at [www.supportnac.org](http://www.supportnac.org).
- To view the study "The Growing Crisis in Recruiting and Retaining the Direct Support Workforce," visit [http://www.ancor.org/dev/Activities/NAC/Final-Report\\_Revised121602.pdf](http://www.ancor.org/dev/Activities/NAC/Final-Report_Revised121602.pdf).
- To view the Senate resolution visit <http://www.ancor.org/dev/activities/nac/sconres21.htm>.
- To view the House resolution visit <http://www.ancor.org/dev/activities/nac/hconres94.htm>. To get more information on the ANCOR National Advocacy Campaign, visit [www.supportnac.org](http://www.supportnac.org).

**NOTE:** The American Network of Community Options and Resources, located in Alexandria, Virginia, is an association of private providers offering supports to people with disabilities. For more information, visit [www.ancor.org](http://www.ancor.org).