March 1, 2019

Dave Dwyer, Southbury Training School
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Dave Dwyer, and I currently work at Southbury Training School. I am testifying today to urge the committee to increase funding for DDS. In particular, I encourage you to support the establishment of innovative programs in DDS that will address the extensive waiting list. Today I am here to tell you about one of these programs and ask you to fund it.

Several years ago, I, along with 38 of my co-workers, successfully completed the DDS Training Academy for Family Support Services. This Academy was the result of an agreement between the State and District 1199 following the recommendation of our joint Labor - Management Education and Training Committee.

The purpose of this DDS pilot program was to provide training to Southbury Training School workers to enhance our skills so we could then successfully transition to work with individuals in their homes and/or with their families. This program was successful in training us to provide Individual Family Support (IFS) services. Unfortunately, it was less successful in deploying these workers- only three are currently providing IFS services.

We are all ready and anxious to provide services to those who need them in the community. We urge you to finish the first pilot project. Recently, DDS posted 18 IFS positions per region. This is a good start, but there are still thousands of people on the waiting list- many of whom need IFS services. We hope you will work with us to move a plan that expands services to meet this need.

We urge you to finish this pilot project and fund this program. We can begin this work in our communities once you include us in the IFS budget.

Thank you for your time.