

Letter to Editor
Wall Street Journal
May 21, 2010

Clare Ansberry's "*Disabled Face Hard Choices as States Slash Medicaid*," (Thursday, May 20, 2010) paints a grim picture of the moral condition of our nation and its treatment of our most fragile citizens.

Community-based service providers nationwide are struggling to maintain quality supports and programs to people with disabilities amid deep budget cuts. Their struggles are compounded further by high turnover due to low wages for Medicaid funded services. Meanwhile, the number of individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in need of residential, in-home and day supports is expected to rise from 1 million to 1.4 million between 2030 and 2040 (U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services).

As your story points out, many parents prefer to personally care for their children with disabilities, but the reality is that as parents age, they can no longer care for their adult children. Budget cuts that curtail services will only create an added expense to society, forcing people with disabilities to move into nursing homes and other costly and inappropriate settings.

Direct support workers are the lifeline for thousands of individuals like Barbara Hickey and Brian Phillips. With long wait lists for services, in-home supports are more important than ever.

Federal, state and local leaders have an obligation to find alternative funding sources for the most vulnerable among us.

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