

## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Ligas Court Monitor Report Highlights

February 7, 2022

The Ligas Court Monitor released her 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2/2/22; a summary of critical highlights related to the current status of the Illinois I/DD community system is detailed below, as well as a link to the full report.

### DSP Staffing Crisis Assessment

The report summarizes historical steps taken by the state to stabilize the community system and in response to the COVID19 pandemic. Despite recent investments in the Illinois I/DD system, the Monitor concludes that *“The current DSP crisis is reminiscent of similar problems cited by the Monitor in 2016 but maybe even worse.”*

Additional direct language from the Report addressing the state of the community system includes:

*“It was noted in the Implementation Plan, FY2021 Revisions, that the Monitor’s concerns regarding capacity development focused on rates and staffing (emphasis included by Monitor). Staff vacancies and high turnover by staff were prevalent statewide then and have now become even worse. The Monitor has heard from dozens of providers and families who are directly and negatively involved in such situations. For example, families from one house were, due to short staffing, expected to take home their family members and medical equipment over weekends. Another agency was operating with nearly 100 DSP openings, despite paying weekend and holiday differentials as well as raising entry DSP wages to \$15.00 in advance of expected state funding increases. Still another spoke of 14 CILAs impacted by both the staffing crisis and COVID. 30%-45% staffing vacancies are not unusual. Other comments from providers include:*

- *“What has been a crisis for some time has now become a dire emergency”*
- *“Current staff are leaving at twice the rate of new staff coming in”*
- *“The system may not have another year to survive. Guidehouse’s last benchmark is too far away”*
- *“People with the highest support needs are suffering the most”*

### Guidehouse Implementation Timeline Recommendation

The Monitor reported: *“The State continues to propose a longer timeline while the Monitor, Class Counsel and the Intervenor recommend that the State fully implement the Guidehouse rate study in the time frame put forth in the report, if not sooner.”*

### Crisis Admission to Community I/DD System

During the period 1/1/20 – 6/30/21, 369 people entered the Illinois I/DD community system due to crisis circumstances, including 46 cases of abuse, 201 cases of neglect and 122 cases of homelessness. 60% of people needed out-of-home residential placement from an I/DD community agency. The urgent need for immediate access to community agency services is occurring at the same time as 59% of Illinois community agencies are reporting a suspension of new admissions due to insufficient staffing resources.

### Continued Need for Court Monitor Oversight

The report addresses the question of whether continued federal oversight of the Illinois I/DD system is warranted by stating: *“The Monitor’s opinion, at the present time, is that, despite the State’s recent efforts as discussed herein, there is more work that remains to be done in order for the State to demonstrate such compliance with the Consent Decree.”*

### Access to Services

The Monitor credits the state for adherence to the Reasonable Pace criteria agreed to by all parties in which the maximum waiting time on the PUNS list would be 60 months from the date of enrollment or the individual’s 18th birthday if enrolled prior to his or her 18th birthday. It was agreed that a minimum of 630 individuals would be served from the PUNS list each year. Current reports indicate that this annual minimum is being met or even exceeded. The Monitor notes however, *“reports also indicate that there are some significant difficulties in finding services once the individuals are selected from the PUNS list. The Monitor has heard from families, providers, ISCs (Independent Service Coordinators) and others that the reasons are staffing shortages and the lack of capacity for those with medical problems, accessibility needs, and behavioral challenges. This has been an ongoing problem which is not yet resolved.”*

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