“I think NJACP has proven to be an excellent reliable resource in a changing climate.”
Who We Are

The New Jersey Association of Community Providers (NJACP) is a nonprofit organization that represents a dynamic community of diverse providers dedicated to advancing sustainable community-based services and supports that enrich lives and build futures for people with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities across the state. NJACP provides support and services to its member agencies that serve our neighbors, family and friends living with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The services our members provide range from residential homes and apartments to employment and vocational programs all with the objective of helping people live healthy, happy and active lives in the community.

NJACP Governance

NJACP is managed by a Board of Directors that are elected from its membership. The Board of Directors and CEO seek input from the NJACP membership to develop a strategic plan and budget which guides our work each year. NJACP manages an effective and efficient operation whose income is largely comprised of membership dues. Currently our resources support four (4) full-time staff, including the CEO.
Meet the Staff

**NJACP’s Chief Executive Officer, Valerie Sellers**, joined the Association in March 2013. She came with seventeen years of experience as a senior executive with the New Jersey Hospital Association where she had multiple departments and areas of oversight including regulatory, managed care, HIPAA, community health, and research conducted by NJHA's Health Research and Education Trust. Ms. Sellers created the departments of Continuing Care and Emergency Preparedness and established the institute for Quality and Patient Safety. As a consultant, Ms. Sellers worked with a variety of clients, including hospitals, in assessing community health status and assisting with mergers and acquisitions of community organizations. Her experience with the healthcare community was extremely valuable during NJACP members’ transition to Fee-for-Service, and will help prepare providers with future changes. Ms. Sellers serves as a Board trustee of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in Hamilton, NJ, and was appointed to Governor Murphy’s Healthcare Transition Team. She is currently a member of the College of Saint Elizabeth Physician Assistant Program Advisor Council. Ms. Sellers currently chairs the New Jersey Coalition for a DSP Living Wage, and is a Governor appointee, to the Independent Developmental Disability Fee-for-Service Transition Oversight Board.

**Maureen Shea** serves as **Director of Government Affairs** for NJACP and brings more than 20 years of experience in federal and state government affairs for several large associations in the State. Her experience includes advocacy and policy development, legislative analysis, development of successful grassroots campaigns, management of three political action committees, two of which met $1 million fundraising goals, extensive experience working with members of the NJ Legislature and Members of Congress, and brings a wealth of non-profit experience to the association.

**Torilyn Villafana** has served as **NJACP’s Office Assistant** since 2018. She joined the Association with a background of having office experience as well as having been a Direct Support Professional (DSP) for more than a decade with two New Jersey Providers. During that time she also worked as a mentor with at risk youth for the New Jersey Department of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP). Her work experience also includes tenure as an Arbitration and Mediation Program Assistant for the Mercer County Superior Court. Tori's field work as a DSP and mentor makes her a valuable asset for NJACP’s advocacy efforts. She has provided testimony at state hearings and spoken with legislators about the DSP workforce crisis.

**Colleen Klepser** is **NJACP’s Director of Education, Events and Member Services**. She has over 20 years of experience in a variety of administrative and operations roles, including tenure at The Electrochemical Society (ECS). Colleen’s responsibilities included serving as the staff liaison to the Board of Directors as well as several high-profile committees. She managed the Society’s elections, awards programs and other VIP events. Colleen also served as the Society’s administrative, human resources, and operations manager. Her experience also includes work with other non-profits and for profit organizations in Pennsylvania as well as extensive volunteer service, and fundraising for a variety of nonprofit organizations.
Providing Access to Its Members

Forum Participation

NJACP provides its members with an opportunity to participate in the development of policy and the identification of changes that must occur with state operations and regulations. Members may participate in many forums including committees and constituency groups; they include:

- CFO Constituency Group;
- Day Services Constituency Group;
- Support Coordination Constituency Group;
- Corporate Compliance and Quality Constituency Group;
- Human Resources Constituency Group;
- Legislative & Policy Committee;
- Member Resources Committee; and
- Finance Committee.
Engaging with Policymakers

Critical to NJACP’s success is access to policymakers. NJACP is a premiere lobbying force in Trenton and on federal issues, focusing on the mission and values of the IDD community. Legislator meetings and provider agency site visits are a priority and effective in realizing our goal to educate and inform policymakers. NJACP accomplishes this in part by working with leaders of other non-profit organizations, other associations and the public. As well as a dynamic social media presence, which the NJ Legislature acknowledged NJACP for its well-run social media campaign. In addition to our presence in Trenton, the following policymakers have met with NJACP members at NJACP headquarters:

- Governor Phil Murphy;
- Senator Joe Vitale, Chair, Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Services;
- Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver;
- Assemblyman Gordon Johnson;
- Assemblyman Dan Benson;
- Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli;
- Assemblywoman Carol Murphy;
- Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker
- Assemblywoman Valerie Vanieri-Huttle
- Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter
In addition to educating legislators, NJACP brought state representatives to NJACP Membership Meetings to respond to issues and/or share information, for example:

- Kathy Patrick, DHS Director of Licensing;
- Jonathon Seifried, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Developmental Disabilities;
- Gwen Orlowski, Executive Director, Disability Rights New Jersey;
- Laurie Woodard, DHS Director of OPIA (Office of Program Integrity & Accountability);
- Jonathan Sabin, Director, Office of Prevention and Office of Autism;
- Amit Shah, CCP Program Manager, DDD
- Wendy Yosco, Director of PPMU;
- Carole Johnson, Commissioner, NJ Department of Human Services;
- Paul Aronsohn, NJ Ombudsman for People with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities and their Families;
- Maria McGown, Director, Office of Investigations;
- Deborah Robinson, Administrator, Office of Performance Management; and
- Brian Brennan, Esq., Division of Medical Assistance & Health Services

“I appreciate being a part of the NJACP. Not only do they provide up-to-date state and federal issues taking place within the DDD community, they also give the provider a voice.”
And finally, other speakers have attended NJACP membership meetings in an effort to exchange information and develop collaborations, including:

- Diane Reilly, Executive Director (former), Supportive Housing Association (SHA);
- Simone Herndon, Social Security Administration Public Affairs Specialist;
- Dr. Matthew Kaufman, CEO, StationMD;
- Mark Davis, President, Ohio Provider Resource Association;
- Bethany Toledo, Executive Director, DSP Ohio; and
- Jillian Hudspeth, Executive Director, NJ Primary Care Association

Access

FEDERAL

Advocacy is the primary function of any association, and NJACP has aggressively advocated for its membership at the state and federal levels. In addition to the NJACP Board of Directors’ ongoing visits with the NJ Congressional Delegation in Washington, D.C., as well as in-state visits, advocacy focuses on the following issues, among others:

- Healthcare reform, including proposals for Medicaid Block Grants
- Overtime Exemption Rule
- Electronic Visit Verification
- Reimbursement for provider staff time during hospitalizations
- Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA)
- Supported Bureau of Labor Statistics classification for DSPs
- Reasonable Merit Based Incentive Payment (MIP) Audits
- HUD Housing Vouchers
- Home and Community Based Services Final Rule
- Federal Solutions to the DSP workforce crisis

NJACP works closely with its national disability organizations to support federal legislation on the issues above, as well as the federal budget process. NJACP is also involved in discussions with the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) regarding state issues, and issues at the federal level.
**State**

- Successful campaign to include $40 million (with an additional equal Medicaid federal match) in the state budget over two years, as part of the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage, to raise DSP wages and address the workforce crisis.
- Advocating with NJ Medicaid to address challenges with implementing electronic visit verification (EVV) for providers.
- NJACP staff was invited and participated in a cable news show to raise the visibility of issues impacting people with developmental disabilities.
- NJACP CEO and members serve on workgroups and task forces including Fee-for-Service Oversight Board, and the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities Family and Provider Workgroup.
- Implemented NJACP telemedicine provider pilot program.
- Establishing workforce development initiatives to help address the workforce crisis.
- Testified and advocated on more than 30 pieces of legislation, introduced and in draft form.
- Held over 100 meetings with legislators, the governor’s office and state department staff on the needs of the IDD community.

**Coalition for a DSP Living Wage**

The Coalition for a Direct Support Professional (DSP) Living Wage, comprised of families, providers, DSPs and people with developmental disabilities, is chaired by NJACP CEO, Valerie Sellers. The coalition advocates for raising the wages of DSPs, supporting workforce development initiatives to address a critical provider staff shortage, and building a strong and qualified workforce, essential to a sustainable system of services and supports for people with IDD. Through intense advocacy efforts, from rallies and advocacy days, at the state house, to a comprehensive social media campaign, the coalition has succeeded in raising DSP wages for three consecutive years, with a bonus for DSPs in the first year,
NJACP is committed to offering varied and dynamic intensive training and educational programs to serve its members. The objective is to help members better understand what is happening with federal directives, in addition to preparing individuals to better perform their job functions, more specifically:

- Medicaid Boot Camp (training more than 500 individuals in four workshops between 2015-2018);
- Ensuring an Effective Investigation of Serious Level 1 & 2 Incidents; (the only NJ training developed with input from NJ DHS)
- HIPAA and Corporate Compliance;
- Excellence in Leadership and Supervision;
- Support Coordination Information Sessions;
- Lunch & Learns.
- Quality Bootcamp (2019)

“I appreciate the information and platform for collaboration that NJACP provides.”
In addition to advocacy, the dissemination of timely information is central to an association’s responsibility to its membership. NJACP provides a wealth of information to its membership including:

- The distribution of a twice weekly electronic newsletter starting in 2013.
- An expansion of information distributed to membership to include provider business issues and resources from state and federal agencies as well as partner organizations.
- Making extensive materials available to members for a number of advocacy issues, preparing members to make phone calls/send emails and/or letters regarding:
  - DSP Wage Campaign;
  - Overtime Exemption Rule;
  - Minimum Wage;
  - Healthcare/Medicaid Reform;
  - Housing Vouchers;
  - Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)
  - Money Follows the Person; and,
  - State and Federal Budgets, including UBIT/Parking Tax Repeal.
- NJACP Education, Events & Member Service Bulletin published once a month
- NJACP’s website, including a directory to lead the public to NJACP member agencies, is a resource for members to locate current information on government affairs, events, trainings and many other topics.
- An enhanced NJACP social media presence, including accounts on Twitter and Facebook, to communicate the latest updates and information in a timely manner, and to enhance advocacy efforts.
- Developed a Corporate Compliance process manual for members to serve as a comprehensive reference in developing corporate compliance plans.
Continued expansion of the NJACP’s Strategic Partner program that now includes:

- Arlington Heritage Group (trust administrator)
- Butler Human Services (furniture)
- Delta-T (staffing)
- Interstate Fleets, Inc. (vehicle leasing, sales & service)
- Mercadien (audits, business consultation)
- Mobility Works (vehicle programs)
- Prime Point (HR and payroll solution systems)
- Relias (employee training and development)
- Rue Insurance (insurance and risk training)
- Schenck, Price, Smith and King (law firm)
- Staples Advantage (office, breakroom and janitorial supplies, etc.).
- StationMD (Telemedicine)
- Twinsis (end to end software solutions)

Events

Annual Conference

- Created a more dynamic conference format by adding “tracks” (session topic emphasis) at annual conference to ensure sessions were offered for various positions within an agency, i.e., DSP, BCBA, S/W management, executives, nurses, etc.
- Offer CEU’s in a number of professional disciplines
- Added Self-Advocacy Track
- Brought prestigious, national speakers to the annual conference including Esme Grant Grewal, Rodney Whitlock, Barbara Merrill, Vikki Wachino and Jamie Stewart.
- Awarded the Public Leadership Award to Senator Corey Booker in 2017, and Senator Robert Menendez in 2016.
- Awarded the Public Advocacy Award to Tom Baffuto in 2018.
- Welcomed the participation of Senate President Sweeney and Assembly Speaker Prieto at the annual conference.
Like any organization, there is a need to function as an effective business to fulfill a mission. NJACP has developed a new infrastructure that allows for the effective and efficient operation of the Association, including developing and adhering to a lean budget with minimal staff. Despite limited staff, NJACP successfully purchased and renovated its own building to better serve its members and allow for on-site training and education, including larger meeting space available to members and the general community (via rental).

To continue to be relevant and effective, NJACP continues to reevaluate its strategic plan, soliciting and incorporating feedback from its membership in the strategic planning process.

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**Events**

**Stars**

Annual awards dinner event recognizing individuals with IDD from member agencies to acknowledge and celebrate their accomplishments.

Successfully introduced legislators to the event including: Senate President Sweeney, Assemblyman Benson, Assemblyman Ciattarelli, and Senator Vitale.

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**Operations**

Like any organization, there is a need to function as an effective business to fulfill a mission. NJACP has developed a new infrastructure that allows for the effective and efficient operation of the Association, including developing and adhering to a lean budget with minimal staff. Despite limited staff, NJACP successfully purchased and renovated its own building to better serve its members and allow for on-site training and education, including larger meeting space available to members and the general community (via rental).

To continue to be relevant and effective, NJACP continues to reevaluate its strategic plan, soliciting and incorporating feedback from its membership in the strategic planning process.
NJACP CEO Valerie Sellers presented a session on managed care at ANCOR’s 2017 annual conference in San Antonio, Texas, a PAR and other state Association Conferences.

- Collaborated with federal trade associations, and utilized ANCOR staff to provide updates and comprehensive information, including attending NJACP meetings and hosting webinars regarding specific topics, i.e., Healthcare Reform, Overtime Exemption Rule, and HCBS rule.
- Participate on ANCOR’s Government Affairs Committee and Communications Committee to advise on the association’s activities in both areas.
- Participate in monthly state executives’ conference calls facilitating the exchange of information.
- Served on ANCOR’s Executive Planning Committee for state executives’ retreats.
- Participated on Anchor’s Strategic Planning Subcommittee on Innovation and Quality.
Collaborations

Collaboration is critical to any effective strategy. It has been a priority for NJACP to develop and foster such collaborations including working with two provider associations (ABCD and The Arc of New Jersey) as well as other associations and organizations that share elements of a common mission. NJACP works closely with the Supportive Housing Association, the Community Living Education Program, Disability Rights of NJ, Autism NJ, the NJ Healthcare Quality Institute, and The NJ Council on DD. NJACP also continues discussions with hospitals to ensure protection for individuals with IDD; with insurance companies to explore better rates for NJACP members; and with law firms to solicit their knowledge regarding issues affecting membership such as cyber security, corporate compliance, mergers and acquisitions, among other issues.

Quality

Quality will be one of the most critical issues facing providers as the IDD community moves fully into Fee-for-Service. This focus is driven by what is occurring at the federal level in CMS as ultimately all states must comply with CMS mandates.

The development of quality measures can be subjective in the IDD community. It is, therefore, critical that the appropriate measures are developed and that such measures truly are indicative of quality care being provided to consumers. NJACP has joined the NJ Healthcare Quality Institute to bring visibility to the needs of the IDD community and to work with entities that have long reported quality outcomes.

In 2019 NJACP Held a Quality Bootcamp with 3 break out sessions with 9 presentation options.
Advocating

NJACP Members’ affiliates at DSP Coalition rally and meeting with NJ Legislators at the Statehouse in Trenton about DSP wages.

Educating

Attendees learning about the status of IDD across the country and within New Jersey

Celebrating

Stars honorees
Our Mission

The New Jersey Association of Community Providers (NJACP) represents a dynamic community of diverse providers dedicated to advancing sustainable community-based services and supports that enrich lives and build futures for people with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities across the state.

“The advocacy work done by NJACP on behalf of its members is invaluable. Together we have made substantial impact to the DD/ID service system.”

NJACP

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