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This testimony is on behalf of the Pennsylvania Association of County Administrators of Mental Health and Developmental Services (PACA MH/DS). PACA MH/DS, an affiliate of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, composed of the county mental health and intellectual disability administrators and directors.

The Pennsylvania intellectual disability service system is administered under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Developmental Programs. The array of services available range from public and private institutional care to community supports for individuals living in their natural homes.

The focus of this testimony is the community programs administered by the 48 county/joiners serving all 67 counties. Community services include small residential programs (serving eight or less individuals), in home supports, community habilitation, various therapies and employment services.

Residential programs assist individuals by helping them actively participate in the community while they learn to live as independently as possible. Options with this model include: licensed group home; support for individuals renting or purchasing their own home; and family living settings where a licensed family provides support in their home for an unrelated adult.

Non-residential community services support consumers and their families through day services that assist individuals with their personal and vocational skill development, by providing adaptive equipment, access to employment programs, respite care, additional therapies and specialized services for behavioral or medical needs.

County MH/ID offices are responsible for enrolling individuals in community services once their eligibility is verified. The MD/ID office also assigns a Supports Coordinator to assist the individual in planning for, locating and monitoring needed services. Once enrolled, individuals may receive appropriate services depending on the availability of state funds or community waiver capacity which is funded with state and federal dollars. This bifurcated system is critical to providing the needed community supports and services. Two community waivers programs (Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Services, which is capped at \$30,000 per year) serve many of the individuals who are eligible for Medicaid. The state only funded services, referred to as “base community services”, provide for all individuals who are not eligible to participate in

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the waiver program; individuals who face insufficient waiver capacity to enroll; and for services not eligible under the waiver. Waiver services are an entitlement program and represent the vast majority of funding for community based services as funding must fully serve the needs of the waiver participants in order to avoid the loss of matching federal Medicaid dollars.

Community base funds, which entails a 10 percent county match for non-residential services, are not required to meet all needs of an individual but make it possible to provide some relief to individuals living in their community until additional resources can be made available. The base funding can allow people to stay in their own natural home rather than enter into more expensive services and supports. The support may be a one-time expense such as a ramp or vehicle adaptation or more long-term solutions such as employment supports that lead to permanent employment or homemaker services or respite care.

There is not sufficient funding either in the waiver programs or base programs to provide community supports and services to all in need. This is clearly evident in the Pennsylvania Waiting List with 14,021 individuals, which includes 4,595 considered at emergency need. Despite budget initiatives to reduce the waiting list and decrease the population at state centers, the list continues to grow. It is critical that base funds be available to permit a more flexible approach to providing the critically needed services which create the safety net and the potential for all individuals, to strive towards the goal of an “Everyday” life in the community.