



For Immediate Release  
 March 2, 2021  
 Contact: Stephanie Van Koevering, 517-974-6065

## Policy leaders approve \$2.25 Direct Care Worker wage increase through 9/30/21

Members of Michigan’s Direct Care Worker community received additional support from state policymakers today, as the Legislature approved a measure to extend—and boost—a temporary wage increase. The Governor is expected to sign the measure.

Lawmakers acted this afternoon to support a \$2.25/hour wage increase. The measure extends the increase through September 30.

“We are extraordinarily pleased that our state’s leaders recognize the value these workers offer,” said Sherri Boyd, executive director of The Arc Michigan. “Direct Care Workers provide essential services and their work is more important than ever.”

Michigan’s Direct Care Workers provide essential personal care, training, emotional support and respite to an estimated 100,000 Michigan residents with mental illnesses or developmental disabilities. Direct Care Workers are severely underpaid, with the average starting wage being less than that of retail companies or fast-food restaurants.

“This is amazing news for 50,000 of Michigan’s talented caregivers,” said Scott Schrum, CEO of Residential Opportunities Incorporated. “Michigan’s Direct Care Workers provide a lifeline for our most vulnerable and deserve to sustain their wages so they can keep providing care to those in-need.”

Last year, Governor Whitmer enacted the temporary \$2/hour wage increase for Direct Care Workers who are on the front lines of the pandemic.

“Michigan families are going to benefit substantially, now that our state’s leaders have done the right thing and sustained this funding so that essential care for their loved ones can continue,” said parent advocate Bob White.

With an average starting wage of \$11.44 per hour—and often minimal benefits—Direct Care Workers have urgently needed the state’s temporary increase. In her Fiscal Year 2022 budget recommendations, Governor Whitmer called for the \$2/hour wage increase to become permanent, which would critically help this essential industry.

###