

Making a World of Difference In People's Lives

www.nadsp.org



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eFlash News

Dear NADSP Members & Friends,

Today, for the fifth time in my life, I am starting a new job. After more than ten years of hard work by a small group of volunteers, the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals have hired a staff person to continue to bring a singular voice to the 875,000 women and men who provide direct supports to people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. As I begin this new job, I wanted to introduce myself to you, tell you where we stand today, and a few things that we aim to achieve over the next two years - sort of a State of the NADSP.

I know that this is a really long update and I hope you read all of it. If you do, I know that you're interested in advancing our Mission and I ask that you help spread it with your colleagues. I'd like to thank Lisa Burck and the members of the NADSP board and our committees for their leadership. I would also like to personally thank Amy Hewitt, Lori Sedlezky and Rachael Sarto at the University of Minnesota for the technical, administrative and moral support that they've given NADSP. Their commitment has been steadfast.

Despite these challenging economic times and uncertain state budgets, this is an exciting time for NADSP because policy makers are beginning to listen to us. I really believe that if we work together, we can make "a world of difference in people's lives".

I can be contacted by email at jmacbeth@nadsp.org, by phone at 518-449-7551, and by mail at 240 Washington Ave Extension, Suite 501, Albany, NY 12203.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JM Macbeth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joseph M. Macbeth
Executive Director

THE NADSP TODAY

The NADSP tries to enhance the status, image and professionalism of the direct support workforce and our [Mission](#) is widely accepted throughout the disability community. Yet many of us hear policy makers and other professionals continue to say things like; "direct support professionals are the backbone of the industry" and "they do the work of Angels". Despite this well-intended rhetoric, direct support professionals largely remain an invisible workforce and do not receive the respect from policy makers and other industry leaders that is worthy of a "backbone ". The NADSP is a grassroots organization that represents *the* unified voice for a large and growing workforce which has long been undervalued and marginalized by others. ***Because we expect to be treated as professionals, we have the responsibility to act like professionals.***

Like most other "professions", we have a [Code of Ethics](#) and we encourage our individual members, agency leaders, policymakers, and people receiving services to read the Code and to consider ways that these ethical statements can be incorporated into daily practice. The beliefs and attitudes that are associated with being an effective human service professional are the cornerstones of this code. ***It is not the handbook of the profession, but rather a roadmap to assist us in staying the course of securing freedom, justice, and equality for all.***

There is a misconception that the NADSP is affiliated with organized labor, or we are just another name for a Union. **The NADSP is, and always will be, [union neutral](#).** The purpose and activity of NADSP is to improve the quality of human services and supports through an ethical, credentialed and respected direct support workforce. We believe that the most effective definition of quality is defined at the point of service-the work that we do every day and our positive effect on those we support. To fulfill the goal of promoting effective direct support practice, the NADSP works vigorously for systems reform and advocates for workforce development interventions that improve the continuity and quality of direct support practice throughout the country. We have never interceded in employee/employer disputes, and we never will. We value our [Supporting Organizations](#) and the difficult fiscal & regulatory environments in which they operate. ***We are convinced that a competent, knowledgeable and ethical direct support workforce will only help our service provider organizations support people with disabilities better.***

The NADSP is the organization that created the national, portable and voluntary [Credential](#) in direct support practice and we are the co-sponsors of the United States Department of Labor-approved competency-based [Apprenticeship Standards](#) for direct support professionals. ***Given the complexity of direct support work, and the unique needs of individuals requiring support, we need training programs that are competency-based and wedded to the principles self-determination and person-centered planning, and tie them to career advancement opportunities.***

The NADSP is a professional membership organization. As of today, the NADSP membership consists of 13 Affiliate Organizations, 5 Family Members, 9 Self-Advocates, 135 Other

Professionals, 65 Frontline Supervisors, 38 Supporting Organizations and 1,069 Direct Support Professionals.

Here's one more fact: we have a long way to go.

THE NADSP OF TOMORROW

The NADSP will maintain close contact with our members via E-Flash, Facebook, Twitter and the [Frontline Initiative](#). We promise to share timely and important news that affects direct support professionals and the people we support. Some of the information that we'll be sharing will include important policy initiatives, grant opportunities, new training curricula that's been accredited, credentialing & apprenticeship updates and general news from our State Chapters. *Got something to share from your state with others? Send it to us and we'll get the news out.*

The NADSP will establish partnerships with self-advocacy groups, family organizations and other direct care worker associations who share our values. We would like to pursue joint grant opportunities, support each other in policy & position papers, share publications across memberships and promote our causes in reciprocal relationships. *Direct Support Professionals, Self-Advocates and Families that work together will be a formative coalition.*

The NADSP will engage other national disability-related groups and organizations and ask for their assistance in creating and nurturing state chapters of the NADSP, promote competency-based training & lifelong learning experiences and to value our work. Among others, we will engage the US Administration on Developmental Disabilities, State Developmental Disabilities Directors, Provider Associations, DD Councils and University Centers on Disabilities. *It's time that we get a coalition that supports the revision of Title III of the DD Act of 2000 and change its language to describe efforts to grow a direct support workforce.*

The NADSP will grow its individual and organizational [membership](#). There are currently thousands of service provider organizations and nearly 1 million direct support professionals in the United States. With your help, we could increase our membership (and our voice) exponentially. The NADSP commits to provide our members with up to date information on the status of your membership and we will explore new, creative and affordable ways to make joining and re-joining our organization easier for you. *Do you know others who should be a member of the NADSP? Has your membership lapsed? Send us an e-mail and let us know.*

The NADSP will provide technical assistance, promotional materials, logos, communications and networking opportunities to our current state chapters and strive to have an active chapter in every state of the country. We will invite members to join NADSP committees and grow a vibrant regional structure. *Do you have an interest in beginning a State Chapter or getting in contact with others in your state? Let us know!*

The NADSP will continue to advance our credentialing and apprenticeship programs to provide national recognition for the contributions and competence of Direct Support Professionals who apply for and meet the credentialing and apprenticeship standards. The NADSP credentialing

program affords Direct Support Professionals the opportunity to commit to the profession of direct support through its three-tiered credential program. The Direct Support Professionals career path begins with the Registration Level ([DSP-Registered](#)). As a DSP -Registered you will then be eligible to complete expert training in the key Direct Support Professionals competencies of empowerment, communication, planning, ethical practice and advocacy to become a fully certified Direct Support Professional ([DSP-Certified](#)). The third level of NADSP credentialing ([DSP-Specialist](#)) recognizes Direct Support Professionals who have obtained specialized training and have demonstrated competence in providing specialized support to individuals with disabilities in community human services.

The NADSP will soon announce a preferred provider relationship with Irwin Siegel Agency, Inc. (ISA) to offer a unique opportunity to our supporting organization members who seek a Limited Benefit Health Insurance Program for your employees. This Limited Benefit Health Plan (LBHP) offers solutions that are designed to provide direct support professionals with access to quality healthcare, in the areas where they need it most. With LBHP, employers can provide broad, affordable accident and sickness coverage for direct support professionals who are not covered by traditional benefit programs and employees who want to supplement other Insurance coverage. ***Stay tuned for this major announcement and membership benefit. It's a big deal.***

We are now open for business and we want to work with partners that have like-minded values. ***Got a product or service that you want endorsed by the NADSP? Our standards are high, and we'll do our due diligence in checking you out, but let's talk.***

