

July 15, 2026

The Honorable Josh Shapiro

Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The Honorable Dr. Val Arkoosh

Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

The Honorable Joe Pittman

President Pro Tempore, Pennsylvania Senate

The Honorable Kim Ward

Majority Leader, Pennsylvania Senate

The Honorable Jay Costa

Minority Leader, Pennsylvania Senate

The Honorable Joanna McClinton

Speaker, Pennsylvania House of Representatives

The Honorable Jesse Topper

Majority Leader, Pennsylvania House of Representatives

The Honorable Matt Bradford

Majority Leader, Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Re: Reaffirming Pennsylvania's Commitment to *Olmstead v. L.C.* and Community Integration

Dear Governor Shapiro, Secretary Arkoosh, and Legislative Leaders:

On behalf of the Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA), representing more than 400 provider organizations serving over two million Pennsylvanians across the Commonwealth's health and human services system, we write to commend Pennsylvania's continued leadership in advancing accessibility, inclusion, and community participation for individuals with disabilities and older adults.

Governor Shapiro's recent Executive Orders promoting accessibility, disability employment, and inclusive state government reaffirm Pennsylvania's longstanding commitment to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have meaningful opportunities to participate fully in community life. Those priorities reflect the same fundamental principles embodied in the United States Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.*—that individuals with disabilities have the right to receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

Recent federal actions that seek to narrow the interpretation or enforcement of *Olmstead* raise significant concerns for providers, advocates, and the individuals we collectively serve. National organizations, including the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), Justice in Aging, ANCOR, and the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, have expressed concern that these developments could weaken one of the nation's most important civil rights protections for people with disabilities.

For Pennsylvania, this issue extends well beyond legal doctrine. The Commonwealth has spent decades building a long-term services and supports system that emphasizes home- and community-based services, consumer choice, self-determination, and competitive integrated employment. These investments have enabled older adults and people with disabilities to remain in their homes, participate in their communities, pursue education and employment, and avoid unnecessary institutionalization whenever appropriate.

The Governor's recent Executive Orders appropriately recognize that accessibility and inclusion require more than removing physical barriers or expanding employment opportunities. Those goals depend upon the availability of a robust community-based service system that provides the support individuals need to live independently. Protecting the principles established in *Olmstead* is therefore essential to achieving the broader vision reflected in the Administration's disability initiatives.

The provider community also recognizes that preserving community integration is increasingly challenging. Workforce shortages, rising service costs, and growing demand for long-term services require continued policy stability and sustained investment. Any weakening of *Olmstead* protections would increase uncertainty at precisely the time providers are working to expand access, strengthen the direct care workforce, and respond to Pennsylvania's rapidly growing aging population.

Accordingly, RCPA respectfully requests that the Commonwealth:

- Publicly reaffirm Pennsylvania's commitment to the principles established in *Olmstead v. L.C.*;
- Continue advancing policies that prioritize home- and community-based services as the preferred model of care whenever appropriate;
- Ensure that Pennsylvania's disability, aging, behavioral health, and intellectual disability systems remain aligned with the Americans with Disabilities Act, *Olmstead*, and the Governor's Executive Orders promoting accessibility and inclusion; and
- Continue working collaboratively with providers, individuals with disabilities, families, and advocacy organizations to preserve Pennsylvania's national leadership in community integration.

Pennsylvania has long recognized that community living is both sound public policy and a fundamental civil right. The Commonwealth now has an opportunity to reaffirm that leadership and provide certainty that the values reflected in the Governor's recent Executive Orders will continue to guide Pennsylvania's service system regardless of changes in federal policy.

We appreciate your leadership and look forward to continuing our partnership in advancing opportunities for all Pennsylvanians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard S. Edley", written in a cursive style.

Richard S. Edley, PhD

President and CEO

Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association