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## POSITION PAPER ON RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

What we stated in 2017 is still true in 2018. “For nearly a decade, there has been a serious lack of new residential development and virtually no self-directed housing for the intellectual and developmentally disabled (I/DD) population with the need for 24 hour care. In Westchester County alone, there are now over **600** individuals on the Residential Request List (RRL) with about **100** of them on the Certified Residential Opportunity (CRO) list which includes consumers who are currently working with OPWDD and have presumably have the highest priority needs. We believe that only about **16** new certified placements were created this fiscal year with most coming from residential schools or facilities. Any other placements were from backfills, for example when residents died. **80% of recent placements have been from the CRO Emergency Need Category. Due to funding issues, we are not aware of any self-directed housing situations created for consumers requiring overnight ‘awake’ staff.**”

That said, we applaud Governor Cuomo and OPWDD’s December 18, 2017, press release that “announced the creation of 459 new certified housing opportunities for residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities living at home across New York State . . . primarily geared to meet the needs of those living at home with aging caregivers, or whose caregivers can no longer support their loved ones.” This is the first concrete recognition by this government of what GROW has been saying the past seven years; that more residential development is needed to satisfy the backlog in demand especially for those individuals who have continued living with their caregivers .

However, the \$60 million annual commitment is a drop in the bucket when compared with the need. Residential development is not merely about providing a number of “beds” or “opportunities,” but it is about providing settings APPROPRIATE to the needs of individuals. With so few new homes being created, we have a hard time imaging the appropriateness of these settings to all of the very diverse individuals who are in immediate need. Further, there remains little transparency as to the management of the RRL and CRO lists leading to distrust and confusion among the families who most need residential placement.

Therefore our recommendations have not changed and if anything have become even more urgent.

## Key Recommendations

- Communicate to all RRL caregivers and consumers how the CRO process works and clear up any misconceptions about the RRL and CRO lists.
- Regional stakeholders and advocates need to see quarterly how the RRL and CRO list are changing and a summary of any new development or realignment of housing resources that occurs.
- A five-year specific and comprehensive housing plan is badly needed to address the unique needs and challenges of more than 11,000 disabled individuals that will eventually need housing. This plan needs to be **funded** in future budgets.
- Creative solutions are needed to pair compatible consumers together in new development. This is especially needed with consumers that have more intensive medical, mobility or behavioral needs that do not lend themselves to a self-directed solution.

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