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MEMORANDUM

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TO: Families, Service Providers and Advocates

FROM: Beverly A. H. Buscemi, Ph.D. 
State Director

RE: DDSN FY 2017-2018 Budget Update

DATE: June 13, 2017

On June 12th, Governor McMaster issued his veto message regarding the FY 2017-2018 General Appropriations Act. His vetoes did not impact funding appropriated to DDSN. The budget approved by the Governor and General Assembly is very good for the DDSN service delivery system as it appropriates \$9,000,000 in new recurring state funds to the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs to address workforce needs. The approved budget also provides \$500,000 to the Greenwood Genetic Center.

Addressing workforce issues continues to be the greatest need within our DDSN service delivery system. The generous appropriations of recent years to reduce waiting lists have helped thousands of people. However, direct care staffing is at a crisis level and we must be competitive in the job market. New or expanded services cannot be provided without a strong workforce. The new funding is a very important first step in what DDSN hopes will be a multi-year effort to increase the hiring wage for Direct Support Professionals to the \$12.00 to \$13.00 per hour range. A new appropriation of \$9 million supports moving toward that goal by increasing the hiring wage to \$11.00 per hour. This represents an 8.8 percent increase from the current \$10.11 per hour.

The appropriation bill does not provide any general pay increase or bonus for state or provider employees. It does include funding to cover the increased cost of health insurance. There would be no increase in deductible and/or co-pays.

The DDSN Commission and staff greatly appreciate the time, leadership and hard work that goes into the budget process. The efforts of Governor McMaster and many legislators ensured services for individuals with disabilities and their families were again given a very high priority in the state budget. Please take time to thank the Governor, your Senator and your Representative for his/her outstanding support of DDSN and services provided across the state. Thank you all for your continued work and advocacy on behalf of those we serve.

cc: DDSN Commission

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