

**\*\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\*\***

**Governor Parson's FY2023 budget must include additional funding for Consumer Directed Services**

**WHAT:** In response to Governor Parson's veto to additional funding for providers of Consumer Directed Services (CDS), MOCIL is mobilizing the community to fight back and demand additional funding. MOCIL is working with Centers for Independent Living and advocates across the state to campaign for a CDS increase.

The CDS program allows eligible individuals with disabilities to control their own personal care and remain independent in their own homes. This Medicaid program serves approximately 40,000 Missourians with significant disabilities.

During this 2021 legislative session, Governor Parson made two recommendations to cut this program by millions of dollars. And, after advocates fought hard to restore these cuts and secure a 5.29% increase, the Governor, in an unexpected move, vetoed the increased funding. The veto happened during the pandemic when healthcare is of the utmost importance, and when Missouri is seeing an unprecedented amount of funding stream into the State for the very purpose of helping Missourians remain safe and healthy in their own homes. In addition, the minimum wage requirements continue to rise and the CDS reimbursement rate is the same as it was in 2017.

"I would've grieved myself to death," are the words uttered by Edna Nashville as she considered what life would be like inside a nursing home if CDS were unavailable.

"The CDS program is vitally important to the independence and the basic health of participants," said Aimee Wehmeier, Paraquad President. "It will be challenging for Paraquad and many other providers to continue delivering CDS services, which would be devastating for thousands."

Governor Parson said it best, "Our direct care and front line staff often make less than entry-level retail positions. These public servants have tough jobs and rarely receive the thanks they deserve, and communities all across the state rely on them every day. At MOCIL, we agree and commend the governor for seeking a 5.5 percent COLA adjustment and a minimum base pay for all state employees. We ask that he extend that same commitment to the attendants who work tirelessly to help people with disabilities maintain their dignity and independence in their homes.

We urge Governor Parson to step up and increase funding for the CDS program. Missourians with disabilities deserve to have the support they need to remain in their own homes.

**WHO:**

MOCIL

Pat Chambers, President: [pat.chambers@mocil.org](mailto:pat.chambers@mocil.org).

Paraquad Participant:

Edna Nashville is a 90-year-old, two-time cancer survivor who enjoys drawing, coloring, and making jewelry. Edna grew up in the Presbyterian church and has multiple siblings, children, and grandchildren. She started using Medicare/Medicaid in 1994 when she got sick and has since suffered a minor stroke, defeated cancer twice, and experiences vertigo. Edna has been receiving CDS services with Paraquad the past 13 years. Edna can be contacted at 314-868-4522.

Paraquad:

Aimee Wehmeier, President: 314-971-9689

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**About MOCIL:** MOCIL is a statewide association dedicated to protecting and advancing the civil rights of people with disabilities.

**About Paraquad:** Founded in 1970, Paraquad is a leading disability services provider in the St. Louis region. One of the oldest Centers for Independent Living in the country, Paraquad champions equity and independence for people with disabilities through services, partnerships, education, and advocacy.