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**In Wake of Recent Federal Action, Shapiro Administration Reaffirms
Commitment to Serving and Protecting Pennsylvanians with
Disabilities**

In July, the Trump Administration announced its DOJ would no longer rely on a landmark SCOTUS decision protecting an individual's right to live and receive services in the community, not an institution.

In Pennsylvania, Governor Shapiro is standing by individuals with disabilities and ensuring they have a say in where they live, work and receive support.

Pittsburgh, PA – The Shapiro Administration today reaffirmed its commitment to ensure the choices and freedoms of Pennsylvanians with disabilities are protected so they can live, work, and participate fully in their chosen community in the wake of recent federal actions that threaten decades of progress.

In 1999, the United States Supreme Court decided *Olmstead v. L.C.* – a case that questioned how states comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The *Olmstead* decision affirmed that unjustified segregation of people with disabilities is a form of discrimination under the ADA and that people with disabilities should have opportunities to receive services in community settings as an alternative to institutional settings when appropriate, consistent with their needs and choices, and when such services can be reasonably provided. Right now, approximately 200,000 older adults and people with intellectual and physical disabilities – the highest in Pennsylvania history – receive disability services in their homes and communities.

However, on July 20, 2026, the Trump Administration [announced](#) that the U.S. Department of Justice would no longer rely on longstanding *Olmstead* guidance when enforcing the ADA. Although this action does not change the law or overturn the *Olmstead* decision, this decision weakens the federal government's commitment to protecting an individual's choice to live and receive services in the community and could put access to disability services at risk.

“Pennsylvanians with disabilities deserve to thrive in their chosen communities. And since the *Olmstead* decision, Pennsylvania has made real progress, closing most of its state centers and shifting standards of care to help people live, work, and participate in the communities of their choosing. But now, this reality – and the decades of progress we’ve made as a society – are under threat by leaders in Washington. This is

unacceptable to the Shapiro Administration,” said **Josie Badger, Executive Director of Governor Josh Shapiro’s Advisory Commission on People with Disabilities**. “In Pennsylvania, we are not turning back the clock, and the Shapiro Administration will always protect the rights, freedoms, and opportunities of Pennsylvanians with disabilities.”

PA DHS Deputy Secretary for the Office of Developmental Programs Kristin Ahrens and **PA DHS Deputy Secretary for the Office of Long-Term Living Juliet Marsala** joined Executive Director Badger and representatives from the **Shapiro Administration’s [Advisory Commission on People with Disabilities](#)** visited Achieva in Pittsburgh to host a roundtable and hear directly from members and advocates from Pennsylvania’s disability community about their success in their communities and the concerns they have in light of recent federal actions.

“In the late 1960s and early 1970s, The Arc of Greater Pittsburgh, then known as ARC Allegheny, fiercely advocated for closing institutions and supporting people with disabilities to live in their communities. Today, families are understandably concerned about the U.S. Justice Department’s legal memo on Olmstead and what it could mean for the future of community-based services. The Governor’s dedication to the ADA and Olmstead sends an important message that Pennsylvania remains committed to protecting the rights and independence of people with disabilities,” said **Mary Hartley, President, The Arc of Greater Pittsburgh; Senior Vice President of Achieva**.

Achieva is one of the largest providers of lifelong supports for people with disabilities and their families in western Pennsylvania. Each year, Achieva supports more than 10,000 Pennsylvanians through services including early intervention, employment, lifelong supports, family trust services, housing, and advocacy. The organization is dedicated to supporting and empowering people with disabilities to lead lives of personal significance in their communities.

“Achieva has long believed in serving people with disabilities in the community instead of institutions. For twenty-seven years, the U.S. Supreme Court’s Olmstead decision has guided disability policy, public funding, and the development of community services, helping create more opportunities for people with disabilities to live and participate fully in society. We are very pleased the Shapiro Administration has publicly reaffirmed its commitment to Olmstead and the principles of community integration,” said **Steve Suroviec, President and CEO of the Achieva Family of Organizations**.

Three Years of Supporting Pennsylvanians with Disabilities

Since taking office, Governor Shapiro has been laser focused on ensuring that Pennsylvanians with disabilities have the resources to succeed and thrive on their own terms:

- In April 2026, the Governor **signed three Executive Orders** expanding protections for Pennsylvanians with disabilities and autism and creating a new **Governor’s Advisory Commission on People with Disabilities**.

- In the FY 2025-26 budget, **Governor Shapiro** secured a **\$21 million** investment to increase the wages of eligible Direct Care Workers, increasing their wages to nearly \$15 an hour on average, expanding paid time off, and providing more access to affordable insurance for approximately 8,500 workers.
- In the FY 2024-25 budget, the Governor secured an **historic \$354.8 million** in state and federal funding for adult intellectual disability and autism (ID/A) services, to raise rates for service providers and Direct Support Professionals (DSP), and begin to clear the emergency waiting list for adults seeking ID/A services.
- Since February 2024, the Shapiro Administration has successfully **decreased the adult emergency waiting list for services by 39 percent**.

The 2026-27 budget builds on this historic progress by **maintaining funding for DSP wages** to support those who provide services to adults with physical disabilities, and **delivering a \$55 million increase to Special Education Funding**, for a total of \$1.58 billion to support students with disabilities and special needs.

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