



The Penn-Mar Advocacy Collective

Overview

“Strategy is what helps us ensure that all our action does not simply become ‘the noise before defeat.’”

– Jim Shultz

Overview

Nationwide, we have seen an increasing concern for the workforce crisis that encompasses Direct Support Professionals (DSP) and the effects it has on families, like your own. Although the Direct Support profession is one of the highest in demand, in the United States, organizations like Penn-Mar Human Services (PMHS) are not likely to fill these positions due to low wages tied to government reimbursements, limited benefits and lack of career advancement. As such, this has created high turnover and high vacancy rates over the last 30 years.

PMHS has spent the last 40 years, as a steadfast advocate on these issues by creating programs, like the Michael James Pitts Endowment for the Advancement of Direct Support Professionals, ensuring advancement and benefits for our staff, while navigating the ever-changing landscape of governance in the field. Continuing our legacy of good, we seek to provide information and direction to our families, allowing our advocacy leaders to be the innovators within our intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) community. Renewing our commitment to advocacy is paramount to the future of those we support and the respect towards the needs and services that are provided to the IDD community.

In its inception, Penn-Mar began with 12 families, today, we have over 600 families and friends that believe in the same mission. We are a collective voice that can create a concerted effort, not only where we see our loved ones in this community, but how we can create equity and inclusion for those with IDD.

The Penn-Mar Advocacy Collective (PMAC) is responsible for supporting the mission of PMHS and the message of our advocacy partners. The goals of the Advocacy Collective are to advance local and statewide legislation, policy and funding to amplify opportunities and experiences for the women and men we support. Members of the committee will be ambassadors of the PMHS mission and will collaborate with the organization.

Focus

- Increase of funding for IDD services that will translate to proper compensation of DSP wages
- Inclusion and equity within the greater community for gainful employment, opportunity and acceptance
- Organization and promotion of IDD Rallies for Pennsylvania and Maryland

What Can You Do?

1. Gather – Like minds at the right moment can create meaningful change
2. Learn - We will learn and train together to understand the issues our community faces
3. Understand – Our stories have power, and sharing them can empower others
4. Advocate – Meet with our legislators to educate them on how their decisions impact our lives

Your Passion for Those You Love Can Transform a New Reality!

1. Working alongside PMHS and the PMAC Steering Committee can lead to policy shifts that can change the life of your loved ones and the future of all people living with IDD. By focusing our efforts during critical moments, creating local activations, we can educate our States and shift the political response.
2. Keeping in-step with our State and National advocacy partners, like Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disabilities (PAR) and Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS), to layer our voices with the larger movement. More voices create more movement! *Other advocacy partners include The ARC Maryland (ARC), The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP), American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)
3. As you know better than anyone, funding for the wellbeing of your loved ones are being left out of the conversation. The constant need to advocate is real and it's time to step up and become a larger voice.

Added Value

Penn-Mar will bring our families together to look beyond and learn from the past to focus on the future. We want to foster your passion, to create effective advocacy and transform what it means to live with IDD. Our hope is to reinvigorate the grassroots spirit that brought our original 12 families together to secure our stewardship for future generations.

The Role of the Committee

Develop and Implement Yearly Advocacy Activities

- Grassroots organizing
- Action items
- Collaborate with State and National partners
- Understand policy issues
- Public education

Responsibilities and Expectations

- To be ambassadors for PMHS and its mission
- Proactive advocacy – action alerts, petitions, writing campaigns
- Proactive planning and relationship building with partner organizations
- To recommend and recruit new members to the PMAC
- To provide recommendations for action items, resources, partnerships or collaborations and initiatives for the committee
- To promote and assist in the efforts of IDD Rallies
- Recognize and develop the skills and talents of volunteers and encourage training and growth of advocacy skills
- Promoting and coordinating meetings with legislature outside of IDD Rallies

Membership

The steering committee is open to all Penn-Mar family and friends that are interested in building the efforts of our community.

- Stand as an ally with PMHS mission and the PMAC Steering Committee
- Serve as an advisory role to further PMACs efforts
- Stay abreast of advocacy news surrounding the IDD community
- Civic engagement
- Be a champion of PMACs roles and mission with peer to peer networking
- Willingness to foster positive and motivational discussion by expressing ideas and input in a constructive fashion
- Interest in bringing change by collaboration
- Have active email account and internet to meet the needs of the committee

Commitment

- 2-3 hours per month
- Join PMHS and PMAC for IDD Rallies in Pennsylvania and Maryland
- Join PMAC members for meetings with our Representatives throughout the year

Staff Support

PMHS leadership team along with the Manager of Volunteer Engagement will collaborate with the Committee to build structure, provide guidance and articulate goals.