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ANCOR Statement on the NPR Series on Sexual Abuse of People with I/DD

Today, [NPR released the first in a series of articles](#) focused on sexual abuse of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. ANCOR applauds NPR for sharing these stories, which are difficult to read, but critically important to tell. We also recognize [the important work of the Arc of the United States in providing resources and legal advocacy](#) to individuals and their families as they struggle with sexual assault and its after effects.

The heightened prevalence of sexual abuse among individuals with intellectual disabilities is an issue that has long been recognized within the provider community, who take their commitment to safeguarding the health and welfare of individuals they support very seriously. ANCOR is hopeful that through NPR's reporting and the Arc's continued advocacy we can work together to better identify and prevent abuse before it occurs. Community inclusion and integration are important factors in this work; segregation and seclusion can be accomplices to predators.

ANCOR is grateful that Joseph Shapiro acknowledged high staff turnover as a serious issue that compounds the challenges of supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities. ANCOR and our members have long recognized that [the single most critical issue facing the provision of community-based services and supports is the inability to recruit and retain frontline staff](#). While a quality workforce is not the full solution to this issue, it is critical – nationally, turnover ranges between 40-60%. ANCOR urges greater investigation of this public health crisis in any reporting and discussion related to sexual and any other type of abuse and neglect.

We are happy to see that Pauline has found safety and support with another community provider; we know community providers can be part of a solution and a path forward for individuals who have suffered sexual abuse.

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The American Network of Community Options and Resources is a national trade association representing more than 1,400 private providers of community living and employment supports and services to over a million individuals with disabilities with a workforce that's over half a million strong. ANCOR advocates for the crucial role private providers play in enhancing and supporting the lives of people with disabilities and their families. www.ancor.org