



## For Immediate Release

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# Congressman Lee Zeldin Holds Press Conference at The Children's Center on Access to Critical Equipment for People with Disabilities



**L to R: Congressman Lee Zeldin  
Stephen H. Friedman, President & CEO  
of UCP of Long Island, UCP of Long  
Island Board Member Steve Louro and  
Rolf Walter, UCP of Long Island  
Participant (front)**

**Commack, NY (August 30, 2016)** –At a press conference held at The Children's Center at UCP of Long Island, Congressman Lee Zeldin emphasized the importance of his proposed H.R. 3229 Bill, a legislation that will protect people with disabilities by ensuring that they have access to vital equipment.

Legislator Robert Trotta of the 13<sup>th</sup> District, as well as UCP of Long Island staff and participants showed their support. “It was a great turnout of people advocating strongly to pass legislation to help individuals and families who struggle with disabilities,” said Zeldin. “People are rallying behind this effort to protect access to essential equipment.”

When the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) of 2008 was passed into law it stated that Complex Rehabilitation Technology (CRT) devices would not be subject to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) Competitive Bidding Program. Congress specifically excluded power wheelchairs and related accessories such as power controls for power chairs, seat/back cushions for proper positioning and tilt recline systems. In November 2014, CMS issued a final ruling, which ignored the 2008 regulation. CMS stated that starting in January 2016 these accessories would no longer be part of a fixed fee schedule, but will be subject to Competitive Bidding Pricing. After hearing concerns of how Competitive Bidding Pricing could negatively impact access to CRT equipment, Congress enacted a one year delay-prohibiting CMS from applying Competitive Bidding Pricing to power wheelchair accessories through December 31, 2016.

The Competitive Bidding Program can cause individuals problems with accessing equipment and services due to fewer suppliers, suppliers will not be able to provide high quality equipment that is safe for individuals due to lowered prices and the program will deny patients the ability to select the suppliers in which they purchase equipment or get repairs. The H.R. 3229 Bill has to be passed by the end of 2016.

“Congressman Lee Zeldin is fighting for people with disabilities and we at UCP of Long Island are grateful for that,” said Stephen H. Friedman, President & CEO of UCP of Long Island. “It is time that Congress acts and passes the H.R. 3229 Bill so those that use, benefit and depend upon wheelchairs can live a life without limits.”

Rolf Walter, who has been using the services of UCP of Long Island for approximately 50 years, explained that wheelchairs represent independence for him and others with disabilities. “These wheelchairs are our legs and we can't get out into the community without them,” he said. “It is so important that this bill gets passed.”

For over 65 years, UCP of Long Island has been committed to advancing the independence, productivity, and full citizenship of people with disabilities by creating **Life Without Limits**. UCP of Long Island provides programs and services to over 3,500 children and adults with a variety of disabilities annually. The Children's Center at UCP of Long Island offers early intervention, preschool and school aged programs. The agency provides Adult Day services which include Day Treatment, Day Habilitation and Respite programs, and job training and placement services. In addition, UCP of Long Island has 31 residences and a 12-unit apartment complex in Suffolk County for individuals with disabilities. It also provides comprehensive medical and dental service in a fully accessible health center.