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## **The Arc of New Jersey Announces Retirement of Long-Serving Executive Director, Names Interim ED**

The Arc of New Jersey, the state's largest advocacy organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), announced that Executive Director Tom Baffuto will retire June 30, after a 40-plus-year career, including 27 years in the role of ED. Under Tom's leadership The Arc of NJ had a tremendous impact on disability issues in the State, shaping policies and effecting change. Moving forward, the Board of Directors has named Assistant Executive Director Michael Prendergast as the interim Executive Director. He will serve in that capacity starting July 1, 2025.

Tom's leadership and vision has resulted in significant growth and innovation for the organization over the past 40 years. He developed many new programs, grew the agency to meet the evolving needs of people with IDD and their families, and was a consistent and formidable voice for the disability community at the State capital.

"Working at The Arc of New Jersey for almost the entirety of my career was the honor of a lifetime," Tom Baffuto said. "The mission of the agency deeply resonates with me and I believe fully in the tenets that drive the organization. It's been a privilege to serve as Executive Director for the past 27 years, to represent people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, and to advocate each and every day for the services, supports and equality that they deserve. I can think of no better place to work than The Arc of New Jersey, and I know the organization is ready to welcome a new leader at the helm."

Tom's statewide advocacy has resulted in numerous successful campaigns on issues such as the Waiting List for services, increasing wages for Direct Support Professionals, and increasing rates in the fee-for-service system.

The Arc of New Jersey's Board President Kevin Sturges thanked Tom for his many years of service to the organization and those it represents. "For the past four decades, Tom has dedicated his life to supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the belief that everyone deserves to live a full, inclusive and meaningful life in the community. His dedication is unmatched and he will be sorely missed. We wish Tom all the best on his retirement."

Michael Prendergast has been with The Arc of New Jersey for 27 years, serving as the agency's Assistant Executive Director. In that role, Michael oversees the finance and human resources departments.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as Interim Executive Director during this time of transition," Prendergast said. "I thank the Board of Directors for entrusting me to lead the organization and I look forward to working with the Board, the staff, and partners to continue the important work that people with IDD and their families rely on from The Arc of New Jersey."