



Testimony on HB 166

House Finance Health and Human Services Sub-Committee

Dear Chairman Romanchuck, Ranking Member West, and esteemed committee members,

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on HB 166. My name is Justin Blumhorst, and I am the Operations Leader of Capabilities. I am here to testify on behalf of both the Ohio Provider Resource Association and Capabilities. Capabilities is headquartered in St. Marys, OH and provides services to people with disabilities in 77 counties, totalling over 3,000 people served per year. 79% of our funding comes from providing services through Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), while the majority of the remaining 21% come from the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). For our services through DODD, we provide adult day habilitation services for people with disabilities. Our services are provided in the community 100% of the time, which is a model we transitioned to over four years ago. We also provide technical assistance to other providers across the state on how to transition their services to this community based model. Providing services in the community, instead of in a facility, allows individuals with disabilities to form relationships with people without disabilities, to become contributing citizens through employment and volunteering, and to bring the state of Ohio into compliance with the CMS Home and Community Based Services Settings Rule.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine, Director Davis for the Department of Developmental Disabilities, and Director Miller for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. With these budget initiatives and the leadership of Director Davis and Director Miller, I believe that we can continue to have a collaborative relationship to serve people with disabilities.

I am submitting this testimony for these reasons.

First, I want to show my support for the funding that is included for transportation in the budget submitted by Director Davis. We provide day habilitation for 272 people across the state per week, and with the majority of them we provide Non-Medical Transportation where we pick them up, transport them throughout the day to volunteer and inclusion events, and drop them off at the end of the day. Currently, the rates do not provide reimbursement for the transportation throughout the day, only for pick up and drop off. We currently provide this service in our model, but have not been reimbursed for mileage during the day since we moved to this community-based service model. The cost of providing this worthwhile, but unfunded community-based service causes us to sometimes pay direct support staff less than ideal wages in order to cover the cost of transportation.

Second, I want to share the need for updated rates to pay for day services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Currently, we provide day services to approximately 55 people per day in the community with 15 Direct Support Professionals. Using the calculations the current rates were developed under, the number of Direct Support Professionals that we are being reimbursed for to provide the service is only 8. We are nearly doubling the staffing ratios



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because our services are provided in the community and require lower ratios and smaller groups. We have followed through with both national and local best practices for providing services. Again, the increased cost of providing this worthwhile, but underfunded community-based service causes us to choose between paying Direct Support Professionals less than ideal wages or lose money providing the service. The wages for Direct Support Professionals, community-based service models, and Non-Medical Transportation are all interconnected and are essential to bring Ohio into compliance with the CMS Home and Community Based Settings Rule and to create meaningful lives for individuals with disabilities.

I am also here to testify on behalf of the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA), as a member of the board of directors and chair of the employment services committee. OPRA represents 160 private provider organizations serving over 32,000 individuals with disabilities with a valued Direct Support Professionals (DSP) workforce of over 24,000. Both I and OPRA would like to show our support of Director Miller's budget initiatives for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). I find that the best way to support people with disabilities and get them involved in their community is to support them to find employment that fits with their interests and strengths. 40% of the services Capabilities provides through OOD are for Performance Based Job Development. The 8% increase and redistribution of risk across payments for this service will greatly help us and other OPRA members in reimbursing the costs that we incur when providing quality employment services. We are also appreciative of the 6.5% increase in reimbursement for other OOD services and the addition of a \$2.00 an hour shift differential for staff providing employment supports to people with disabilities during evenings and weekends. These increases will assist Capabilities and OPRA members to begin to pay Direct Support Professionals who provide employment services higher wages.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to address this house sub committee.

Sincerely,

Operations Leader
Capabilities