



Senate Medicaid Committee

Testimony of Susan M. Gregg
State Director, Caregiver Homes of Ohio
May 14, 2015

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Cafaro and members of the Senate Medicaid Committee. I am Sue Gregg, State Director of Caregiver Homes and I am an interested party testifying on the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities' Service Goals identified in HB 64.

Caregiver Homes is a provider of Shared Living (Adult Foster Care /Adult Family Living). We have been a provider in the State of Ohio since 2011 under the Individual Options Waiver and currently operate in 5 additional states (MA, RI, CT, IN, LA), and are launching our program this year in TX. We currently serve over 2,700 individuals across these states through Medicaid 1915(c) and 1115 Waivers and State Plans, and through contracts with PACE and Managed Care Organizations.

In Ohio, we actively participate and partner with individuals, their families and guardians through multiple advocacy groups such as: APSI, DODD, OPRA, OACB, the ARC, SIBs and the Ohio Olmstead Taskforce. Along with our partners, and other advocates we are preparing for the transformational changes in the service delivery models from traditional institutional care to innovative Home and Community Based Services.

Caregiver Homes has provided testimony over the past 4 years requesting Shared Living to be expanded in the I/O waiver and to be added in the other Medicaid waivers that Ohio offers. This is the first budget that documents the cost savings and efficiencies related to the Shared Living model. We are pleased that the Department on Aging is beginning work to add Shared Living to the PASSPORT Waiver, making this service available to older adults living in the community by July 2016.

In providing person-centered planning as required by the CMS HCBS Final Rule, Ohio has developed a reasonable transition plan and budget to meet the intent. Shared Living and Adult Family Living have been designated as 100% compliant with the rule. We acknowledge that Shared Living is only one option of community based alternatives to institutional living but it should be looked at as a first option for an appropriate least restrictive environment if so desired by the individual.

Change is difficult. We see first-hand the struggles individuals and their families go through when recommendations for new living arrangements are made. We all want to be in a home where we feel

we are safe and loved. We want to be cared for by those that we define as our friends and families whether we are related or not.

The more important and compelling reason to expand the use of Shared Living in our waiver system is the impact it has on the individuals that are served. Within our organization we have successfully supported individuals that many have thought could not be supported in the community.

- Jeff was eligible for intermittent supports in the community but he wasn't healthy or active in his community. Now he is happy and healthy receiving constant support from his new family. He has shared his story in print and video highlighting how fulfilled he is to have a family, one created by his choice
- David lived in a developmental center for over 60 years and now lives with a friend –a former staff member who has welcomed him into her family.
- Candy was involved in the criminal justice system and has successfully lived in a shared living setting for the past 2 years.

DODD has developed innovative and comprehensive strategies to provide choices for individuals and their advocates as they evaluate their options as we move away from legacy programs into those identified by Director Martin.

By supporting the budget proposal brought forward by DODD, reallocation of resources from higher cost institutional settings towards community based service alternatives will increase the department's ability to serve more individuals in the community.

Included in these options are:

- Increased number of Individual Option and Self Waivers
- The closure of 2 developmental centers
- The reduction of private ICF beds.

These options will still provide individuals with choices in their preferred living settings while redirecting funds to serve more that currently are on a waiting list for waiver services.

We are committed to continue our assistance to individuals who may choose to explore Shared Living and look forward to working with the Department on the implementation of expanding access through the waiver system.

Thank you.