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## Testimony on HB 166

Ohio Senate, Finance Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid

Chairperson Hackett and Esteemed Committee Members,

I am Justin Blumhorst and am writing to provide testimony on behalf of Capabilities where I serve as the Operations Leader. 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). We are OOD's largest private community rehabilitation provider. The majority of the remaining 21% of our funding comes 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 want to express my deepest gratitude to Governor DeWine, Director Miller, Director Davis, OOD, DODD, and the Ohio House of Representatives who, separately and collectively, have made an unprecedented investment in services for individuals with disabilities.

I would like to show my support of Director Miller's budget initiatives for 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 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. These increases will assist Capabilities to begin to pay Direct Support Professionals who provide employment services higher wages.

I am appreciative of the administration's proposal to invest in the homemaker/personal care service to help increase the average wage of Direct Service Professionals (DSPs) providing that service. I am even more appreciative for the commitment from your colleagues in the House to build off of the DeWine Administration's executive budget to further increase the average wage of a DSP providing the homemaker/personal care service. As an agency, we do not provide these services through this funding mechanism, but we see the need and greatly support an increase in the wages to help attract and retain DSP's to help support people with disabilities.

I want to show my support for the funding that is included for transportation in the budget submitted by Director Davis for DODD. We provide day habilitation for 272 people across the state per week. With the majority of the people we serve, we provide Non-Medical Transportation (NMT) 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. If a workgroup is formed before implementing

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this funding, please expedite the work of this group as fast as possible. The longer this potential workgroup works together will further delay the ability of people with disabilities to get to their jobs and volunteer in their community.

The developmental disabilities services field is in agreement on the direction and actions to be taken to increase our support and positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities and their valued DSPs. This is a compliment to the current administration under Governor DeWine, self-advocates, parents, families, county boards, private providers, and the Ohio House and Senate. On behalf of my agency, my staff, and the individuals we support, I encourage you, Senator Hackett and Members of this Committee, to support the proposed budget provisions relevant to Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and the Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Justin Blumhorst



Operations Leader

Capabilities