



Services for Individuals
with Disabilities

Ohio Senate

Finance Committee

May 28, 2019

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Chairperson Dolan and Esteemed Senate Finance Committee Members,

I am Melanie Kasten-Krause and writing to provide testimony on behalf of SHC / The Arc of Medina County where I serve as the Executive Director. SHC has been a provider for over 66 years. We serve 200 individuals with 184 DSP staff – when fully staffed. Unfortunately, we are running with 30% open DSP positions and have been for almost two years. We provide home personal care, adult day services, payee services, non-medical transportation, and operate nine ICFs for individuals in Medina, Ashland, and Huron counties.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Governor DeWine, Director Davis, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, and the Ohio House of Representatives who, separately and collectively, have made an unprecedented investment in services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am appreciative of the administration and the Ohio House’s proposal to invest in the homemaker/personal care service to help increase the average wage of DSPs providing that service. SHC DSPs are the backbone of our agency. They are highly trained, multi-skilled care givers who provide consistency in the lives we support. DSPs are more than just employees, they are family. The proposed wage increase will help DSPs. The current Medicaid rates do not provide a livable wage, leaving many of our staff living below the poverty line. Increasing the DSP wage will allow us to recruit and retain staff. We strongly support higher wages for these most valuable people. As an agency committed to providing services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the investment helps ensure my agency can continue to provide our array of services.

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. On behalf of my agency, my staff, and the individuals we support, I encourage you, Senator Dolan and Members of this Committee, to support the proposed budget provisions relevant to the Department of Developmental Disabilities. Together we will succeed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melanie Kasten-Krause, SHC / The Arc of Medina County Executive Director

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