



**Executive Offices**  
9772 Diagonal Road  
Mantua, Ohio 44255

(330) 274-2272 | (800) 233-8611  
[www.hattielarlham.org](http://www.hattielarlham.org)

March 10, 2021

Testimony on HB 110  
House Finance Committee

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley, and Esteemed Committee Members,

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to offer this testimony on Ohio's operating budget.

My name is Stephen Colecchi, and I am the CEO of Hattie Larlham. The main office of Hattie Larlham is located in Mantua (Portage County), Ohio. We are a not-for-profit entity that provides supports for 1,600 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. At the present time we employ 950 individuals across various locations.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine, Director Davis for the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), and Director Miller for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). With these budget initiatives and the leadership of Director Davis and Director Miller, Ohioans with developmental and intellectual disabilities will continue to receive the vital services that organizations like mine provide.

Hattie Larlham is one of the largest providers of I/DD services in Ohio and our service area includes Northeast and Central Ohio. We have physical locations in Portage County, Summit County, Cuyahoga County, Franklin County and Delaware County. The services that we provide include ICF and Supported Living Residential Services; Adult Day Support; Employment and Work Training Services; and a whole host of other related programs and services. The programs and services we provide are important to the individuals we serve and make a meaningful and positive impact on their lives. Our goal is always to provide comfort, joy and achievement to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

To best support these services and the Ohioans who receive and provide them, I encourage you to support the addition of the following initiatives into Ohio's biennium budget:

- Increase general revenue fund appropriations in DODD's budget to fund much needed Homemaker and Personal Care, Day and Vocational Services and Nonmedical Transportation, Medicaid home and community-based waiver services rate increase. *These increases will provide much needed funds for Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages, support for other front line professionals and sustain the infrastructure necessary to provide our services.*

- Increase general revenue fund appropriations in DODD's budget to support the reimbursement formula for intermediate care facilities (ICF).
- Support a budget amendment that would allow ICFs to choose between a reimbursement rate freeze or a continuation of the formula for the first year of the biennium.
- Support the creation of a Task Force to address our system's workforce challenges. *This Task Force will identify several initiatives and projects designed to help providers recruit and retain a qualified workforce.*
- Support the as introduced budget for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities.

It is vitally important that we work together to continue to address DSP salaries. At present, Hattie Larlham has 150 job openings. These vacancies are largely driven by low starting salaries, which are in part largely driven by reimbursement rates. To put the numbers in perspective, every \$1.00 per hour increase in the DSP hourly rate at Hattie Larlham results in an additional annual cost to the organization of \$1,000,000. We have raised the hourly rate significantly over the last 2 years using a combination of additional reimbursement and Hattie Larlham funds, but much more needs to be done.

With your leadership, together we can ensure these services are available to the Ohioans that so greatly need them. Thank you again, for the opportunity and privilege to bring my concerns before you and if I can ever be of any help in this process, please let me know.

Regards,



**Stephen Colecchi**

Chief Executive Officer

Hattie Larlham

9772 Diagonal Road

Mantua, Ohio 44255

Email: [Stephen.Colecchi@hattielarlham.org](mailto:Stephen.Colecchi@hattielarlham.org)

Phone: 330-840-6838

Cell: 330-472-5572