

## Interested Party Testimony for House Bill 110 (Oelslager)

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*Interim HealthCare*

*May 13, 2021*



Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on HB110—the state budget. My name is Deb Studer, and I am an Administrator for Interim HealthCare.

Interim HealthCare has 70 offices in 5 states with 33 of those locations in Ohio. We serve Ohioans with home care and hospice in 81 counties. We serve all ages from pediatric to geriatric. We currently serve 3,800 individuals in Ohio.

I am here to testify today on an amendment that would increase home and community based service rates by 5% in FY22 and 5% in FY23 (a 10% increase total). While we appreciate the inclusion of the 4% increase in the Governor's as introduced version of the budget, the 4% increase is simply not enough for providers to continue to support the vulnerable patient population where it matters most, at home.

Home and community based services are extremely important for these reasons:

- Ohioans can be safely cared for at home as evidenced by the pandemic and the need for care in the home,
- Home settings are more cost effective,
- Home settings are preferred by Ohioans and their families so they can remain together,
- Home settings, with support, can reduce hospitalizations and medically dependent individuals can receive those services in the home, i.e., therapy, home infusion, wound care, private duty nursing, etc.
- We are the lifeline for those choosing to remain at home by keeping them at home. This was never truer during the pandemic.

Low reimbursement rates are affecting our ability to provide services in the home. We are unable to recruit and retain staff and provide the regulatory training. As our population ages, the need for our services becomes much greater. We find ourselves unable to staff our clients and have had to make some difficult decisions. Access is becoming a real issue.

Now is the time for the Ohio Senate to invest in home and community based services. I am sure many of you have experienced the benefit of home care or hospice or know someone who has. These services are the least costly form of health care and the primary choice for Ohioans.

I took a recent complaint from an individual who was upset that we had given her a 30-day notice. She had been with us for six years and loves our company and the

caregiver she has. I had to explain that she is authorized for more services than we can provide as we are unable to recruit staff to provide these services. It would only be fair to transition her to another organization that can meet her needs.

We hope that with the increased reimbursement rates, not only will we be able to retain our qualified caregivers, but also be able to continue to staff our current patient's cases and have the ability to serve new clients in their homes. We want to ensure that we continue to bolster our workforce as the need for home care continues to rise. The vulnerable populations need our help, and we are the caregivers that can meet that demand at a lower cost. Interim believes in investing in people, and we cannot do that without the help and support of the Ohio Senate.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today. As a provider for constituents in some, if not all of your districts, I am asking for you to support an amendment that would provide a 10% increase to home and community based service rates over the biennium, so that I can safely and effectively continue to provide services in the home. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.