

**First and foremost I'd like to address the payment crisis with Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) here in Ohio. It is unacceptable if not criminal. There are those of us out here in the field that have gone without pay or partial pay for months. I personally went for several weeks without pay this time around. Unfortunately this is not the first time this has taken place. The major change that was launched, I want to say 2016 ish when Buckeye and Molina were introduced into the system, many of us went over a year without pay! Let that sink in, yes over a year without pay! That incompetent launch was a nightmare. For time's sake I will just say we lost the lion's share of Independent Providers (IP). Nurses and Aids as well as many community recourses just folded up, transportation and meal deliveries to name a couple. It seems to me it's time ODM takes a serious look at restructuring and overhauling a very broken system. We cannot afford for the current system to continue, for providers and recipients alike. Which brings me to my next major concern, which has already been brought to the table multiple times in these recent hearings, and that is our wages. I am one of the IP Nurses providing shift care. We are paid for the first hour at the base rate, then we are cut \$10/hr per shift, when covering a 12 shift. That is a significant amount! That is not fair neither is it right. How and who came to the conclusion that was a fair decision. I've provided both visit and shift care, and I will say I work very hard providing shift care. Also, I would like to reiterate again, the desperate need for a substantial wage increase. We've covered here in more than one meeting by more than one source, such as the excellent representation provided by Maxim Home Care that covered pretty clearly that our wages do not reflect anywhere near our surrounding states. Not to mention, none of the other states cut the hourly rate covering the shift.**

**We need transparency and effective communication providing anticipated timeframes for implementing the solutions.**

**Then last but certainly not least, during these hearings, we've all heard the heart wrenching testimonies from one of our most vulnerable populations regarding the Nursing Crisis, we've heard their testimonies of the broken and disconnected process when applying for services with appalling and frankly frightening outcomes. I'd like to pause here for just a moment to acknowledge their heart, tenacity, bravery, and sacrifice for some to go without going to bed the night before, sleeping in their chairs to get here on time, to have their voices heard! And if those voices do not rattle us to the core, then I think we need to check for a pulse. All of these devastating crises need to be addressed immediately, and I know we can do better.**