

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and esteemed members of the Committee,

My name is Pete Moore. I am honored to be with you today. I am representing a coalition of associations serving Ohioans with developmental disabilities, their families, and the system that supports them. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

My message today is simple. I am here to express gratitude. When we began this biennium budget journey in front of the Finance Health and Human Services subcommittee, we thanked Governor DeWine for providing us a great foundation for our discussions with all of you. And now, I thank you for the incredible support you showed for developmental disability services in Substitute House Bill 33.

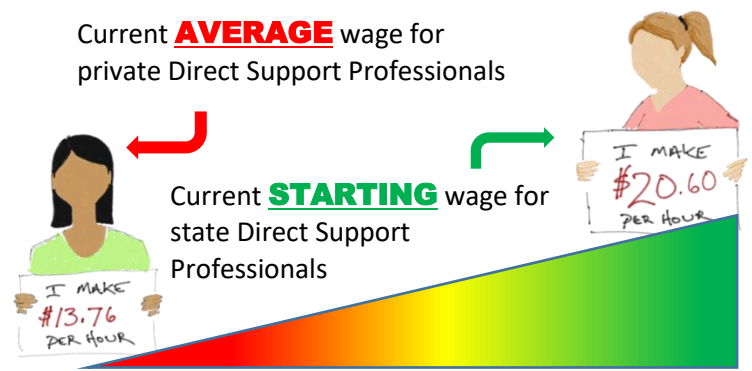
Ohio's developmental disability provider community is struggling and in turn, the people they support and their families are also struggling. Over the past few weeks you heard testimony from Adam Guinther from Marion County talk about his agency serving 25 less people than they were 2 years ago. You heard Dr. Jason Jolly, a parent from Athens County talk about the struggles to find a provider for his child. You heard from Holly Cordes from Wood County talk about how important day services are to her son and the fear of losing those services. You heard from numerous people share heart-wrenching stories about how their lives have been severely impacted by this shortage.



By 2028 the demand for Direct Support Professionals will grow by 24%.
-Director Kim Hauck, DODD

I communicate best with pictures, and although the drawings in my written testimony are faceless, this crisis is anything but. Over the past month you heard from the true faces of this direct support workforce shortage; the people and families, from your communities, who are struggling to have their needs met every day.

We asked for your understanding and partnership to address this direct support crisis. You demonstrated your understanding and partnership, and for that we are grateful. We shared the disparity between what private providers can pay their Direct Support Professionals (DSP) and what state-run Developmental Centers pay. Members of the Finance Committee spoke out about this disparity and for that we are grateful. Ohio's provider community is a business community that is 100% reliant on Medicaid funding; meaning we are 100% reliant on your support and investment. Through this budget bill, you give us the opportunity to pay our DSPs a competitive wage and stabilize disability services, and for that we are grateful.



Thank you for your time, dedication and support to Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. We are excited and eager to partner with you as we work to sustain our system.

Respectfully submitted,



President and CEO
The Ohio Provider Resource Association

“There is uniform agreement across our support system that the number one issue facing the DD community is the fear, stress, and danger to health and safety caused by the scarcity of DSPs. Ohio's DD system has long struggled to recruit, retain, and invest in this essential workforce. Without substantial changes, it will continue to be a critical problem as more people need our system's support.”

-Kim Hauck, Director, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

