

Testimony of Stacey Browning before the Medicaid Committee | May 4, 2023

It is an honor to speak before the Medicaid Committee today. My name is Stacey Browning. By way of brief background, today I have what's known as a portfolio career. I am a corporate board director, investor and growth advisor. In the non-profit sector, I serve on the board of a family foundation and am a Trustee of Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Previously, I spent my career at Paycor, the now publicly-traded HR tech company founded in Cincinnati, OH. I joined that firm as the 11th employee, ultimately becoming its President. I helped scale it to over 2,000 employees with responsibility for software, IT, operations, marketing, strategy and more.

I count myself very lucky. Work has always been a mental outlet for me. I'm mom to two sons. My youngest has significant disabilities resulting from an underlying genetic mutation. Since his birth, he has required increased medical attention and all his personal care be performed by others. He cannot sit, stand, walk, see, feed or change himself, he has seizures, breathing issues and other medical concerns. His name is Mitchell and he turned 16 last month. He has the distinction of being 8th in the world identified with his particular genetic abnormality.

We are fortunate that when he was just an infant, a wise neurologist advised us to get Mitchell on the waiting list at St. Joseph Home for that specialist was assured our son was of the acuity, he would eventually need a higher level of care than we could manage at home. There was an opening in 2015 and the

timing was right for our family. As such since then, Mitchell has resided at St. Joseph Home in Sharonville, Ohio where he receives the nursing and personal support he requires.

Let me quickly emphasize a couple things. It's not easy or normal to transition your child to someone else's care so young. It's been made easier because we have learned to value having options for our son's care. For instance, we prefer and see benefit for him residing in a larger facility, in our case an ICF, that brings multiple resources together in one setting. It also diminishes risk as one is not reliant on a limited sized team. We've also embraced having high concern for those in the role of caregiver or DSP. They are on the frontline doing the what's needed for Mitchell.

Still, we have been around the healthcare and disabilities community for 17 years now and are seeing signs of the increasing stress of the industry lately. Specifically, we are observing:

1. The same employee flexing to perform multiple roles, filling in where needed
2. Employees aware and sensitive to when the whole organization is not doing its best
3. The increasing war for talent resulting in losing experienced workers to other facilities and hospitals that are offering significant hiring bonuses and challenged themselves, are more open to the hiring of less skilled candidates
4. Difficulty in rehiring, causing positions to be open for long durations
5. Uncertainties about the practicalities of delegated nursing in real practice

6. That it takes time and expertise to revolutionize and process improve for efficiency - a fresh approach to group living is needed

Again, my family is incredibly grateful our son Mitchell is able to reside at St. Joseph Home and appreciate the State of Ohio's investment in the Developmental Disabilities network. We have high trust in all leadership involved. It's merely become obvious to us, care-recipients, that what's worked in the past is no longer exactly the model for the future in terms of workforce, compensation, and systems. We share the opinion that the easiest first step with the highest impact is to increase the average wage rate for the DSP workers. We are greatly concerned about continuity and quality of care for our son and others like him regardless of where they reside.

Our family remains open to collaboration and providing feedback toward the goal of improvement and sustainability for the disabled community.

Sincerely,

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