



## Testimony on SFY 24/25 Operating Budget

### Senate Medicaid Committee

**Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Ingram, and esteemed committee members,**

**I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.**

My name is Scott A. DeLong and I am the CEO of Champaign Residential Services, Inc. (CRSI), and we are located in Urbana, Ohio providing services in Allen, Auglaize, Champaign, Clark, Darke, Defiance, Franklin, Fulton, Hardin, Knox, Logan, Lucas, Madison, Miami, Paulding, Seneca, Shelby, Union, Van Wert, and Williams Counties. We are an organization that serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities within varying settings primarily in the western portion of the state. Our services fall primarily under the home and community-based waiver services in both licensed and non-licensed settings, Non-Medical transportation, and Intermediate Care Facilities all administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of six hundred twenty-two (622) employees are proud to provide these essential services to four hundred one (401) Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

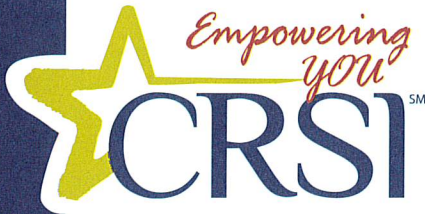
I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD and very appreciative of the additional investments adopted by the House of Representatives. With these budget initiatives and the leadership of Director Hauck, Ohioans with developmental and intellectual disabilities would continue to receive the vital services that organizations like CRSI provides.

CRSI is a provider of services providing care and assistance to some of Ohio's most vulnerable populations. We pride ourselves on high quality services and serving some of the most challenging individuals. Over the past two years it has become next to impossible to attract and maintain the quality of staff necessary to meet the high quality and the ability to serve the most challenging. The additional investments and collaboration will assist in maintaining our goal of serving individuals with high quality staff and create

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opportunities within our communities for those we strive to provide a high quality of life.

CRSI has been forced to reduce services with the reduction in employees. The past several years we have seen went from providing services to over 600 individuals in 25 counties down to 400 individuals in 20 counties. As well as employing over 900 employees and down to 600 staff forcing our team to make decisions to downsize and not take on new individuals. Weekly we are fielding 15-20 requests from guardians and county boards to provide serves to someone new. With the shortage of staff and the desire to provide quality services we have to forgo accepting new residents at this time. We are currently looking at serving notice in several additional counties as our staffing levels are leaving us at a crisis level and the quality of care and services offered are declining. Many other businesses within our service area have the ability to cut hours, close early or unfortunately have been forced to close. We do not have the ability to close early, stop services or close without consequences to those we serve, their families and our employees. Increasingly, we hear from families, aging parents and siblings with their own families, who are forced into situations where they are forced to leave their jobs and other opportunities to ensure their loved ones get the care they need.

Many times, staff are asking why they cannot receive wages such as those businesses that our staff drive by or shop in with those they care for. Staff are seeing those very individuals they provide services for making higher wages than themselves and again question how this is possible and how we are responsible for an individual's life and paid lower wages. Today we are averaging over 50% turnover in our employee pool for higher wages, fewer hours and less responsibility. The shortage has caused high levels of job fatigue for those who work in the industry with a caring heart and desire to serve. Those very high-quality employees are calling it quits more than ever saying it is no longer worth it.

I ask that this Committee approve the budget recently passed by the Ohio House of Representatives and encourage you to invest additional dollars into these vital services to raise direct support professional wages to an average of \$20.64. This investment will assist in securing additional staff

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and retain the current employees and allow CRSI to provide services to additional individuals currently not receiving services.

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,

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