

**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 Lisa Reed, and I am the Executive Director of RHDD. We are located in Southeastern Ohio, serving Athens, Coshocton, Holmes, Guernsey, Meigs, Morgan, Muskingum and Washington Counties. RHDD provides an array of services to people who have IDD including residential, adult day and vocational, non-medical transportation, and employment services through the home and community-based waiver program administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of 211 employees are proud to provide essential services to 193 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 in House Bill 33.

I need to express to you the dire situation that Ohio Medicaid Providers face as our staff are asked to work more than 60-70 hours a week to provide for the care and well-being of the people we currently serve. Being able to expand services has not been a possibility for years because our access to qualified applicants is virtually non-existent. Our staff have been relentlessly dedicated to the Individuals we serve providing highly skilled services to extremely vulnerable people. They do this, not because of the meager wage they earn, but out of love and loyalty. Throughout the pandemic, when others were too afraid to leave their homes and when businesses were shut down, our staff never failed to march on and ensure that the people we serve were cared for and kept safe, even at the peril of their own health and that of their families.

But they are tired; we are all tired. Through the pandemic and for year prior to the pandemic, our field has been faced with limited employees due to many factors; physically and emotionally draining work, undesirable schedules including weekends and holidays, and a pay rate that in most cases is far below the poverty level.

Our staff feel marginalized. They tell me that they feel as though the services they loyally provide must not matter to decision makers because we faithfully provide testimony about improving DSP wages at every budget cycle but there has yet to be any meaningful change. I cannot express to you with enough sincerity just how badly this rate increase is needed. The people we serve deserve to have dedicated and long term staff assisting them. Our staff deserve to make a living wage while providing this necessary support.

House Bill 33 as passed by the House is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by RHDD. We encourage this committee to support the House's version of H.B. 33 as it pertains to DODD appropriations. Further, we encourage the Senate to invest additional dollars into these vital services to

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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.



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