



May 7, 2023

Re: Testimony on SFY 24/25 Operating Budget Senate Medicaid Committee

Dear 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 Mary Horoszko, and I am the Chief Development Officer at Hattie Larlham, an Ohio disability service organization in Mantua, and one of the largest providers to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) in the state.

Hattie Larlham serves over 1600 people, at over ninety locations, in eleven counties throughout Northeast and Central Ohio. I am also the family member of developmentally disabled individual who, although not served by Hattie Larlham, depends on residential care and Direct Service Providers, (DSPs) to help her live and thrive every day.

I know firsthand the impact and importance ID/DD care has on an individual in need; the strain it puts on a family to rely on the aid and assistance of others to care for a loved one, and the demand required to provide professional, consistent, compassionate care to those who cannot care for themselves. Every human being deserves to live their best life; those being cared for and those who are providing the care.

Ohio's DD system is in crisis, and we need your help.

As you are aware, the DD provider community in Ohio has been significantly challenged by staffing issues over the past several years. Ohioans with disabilities cannot get the care and support they desperately need because of the unprecedented workforce shortage. Hattie Larlham at present has over 150 job openings. This workforce crisis has strained our current employees with long hours, extra shifts, and stressful environments. It certainly has impacted our ability to provide additional services to those in need. My sister-in-laws home has changed, living arrangements altered, daily care and the faces behind that care have both changed dramatically; all due to short-staffing. To keep people with ID/DD in their homes, safe, healthy, and flourishing, Statehouse legislatures must support and increase Medicaid reimbursements directed to DSPs so organizations can retain employees, compete with jobs in other market sectors paying higher wages and fill much needed open positions.

I am incredibly 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, but it is simply not enough.

Without additional funding, providers in Ohio will be forced to close, limit more programming and services and unfortunately, continue to reduce the size of their operations. House Bill 33 as passed by the House is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by Hattie Larlham. 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 raise direct support professional wages to at least an average of \$20.64. This investment will help us recruit and retain the workforce needed to continue to provide our quality services.

With your leadership, together we can ensure these services are available to those who so greatly need them, and every Ohioan lives their best life! Thank you again, for the opportunity and privilege to bring my concerns before you and if I can help further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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