

Tim MacLean

Senate Medicaid Committee

Interested Party Testimony, House Bill 33

May 11, 2023

Chairperson Romanchuk, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 33.

My 35-year-old daughter, is highly functional but medically fragile. She is a client of our county's Developmental Disability Board. She can live on her own, work part time, and be involved in the community with PDN support through her DD Waiver. We are grateful for this support as she has flourished.

I arrange her PDN support through 2 nursing agencies which we have used for over 10 years. While some nurses would come and go, others have been on her case for 10 years. Prior to the last 18 months, when a nurse would leave her case for whatever reason, it wouldn't take long for the agencies to find a new nurse.

However, over the last 18 months we have lost nurses and agencies can't find replacements. We now have several nurse vacancies for over a year. I call the agencies every week to check on recruiting efforts. I hear the same from both agencies, "we have many clients with open nursing shifts and want to fill them, but we can't get nurses in the door due to poor hourly reimbursement from Medicaid and/or DD". They report nurses may start the on boarding process but will not finish, as they find a better paying nursing position in the community. Additionally, they can't compete with pay and bonus offered by healthcare systems. What has happened? Why is the State not keeping up with a competitive pay structure for the nurses caring for this vulnerable population?

They need qualified nurses to provide the care that allows our loved ones with health challenges to have the highest quality of life possible. As I have seen how my daughter has flourished with PDN, it would be heartbreaking to see her lose the support that allows her to work, go to church, shop independently.

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Open shifts become the responsibility of family, affecting our ability to work and support other family members.

Please increase the hourly wage for PDN. These nurses have a special heart to care for those with disabilities. They deserve appropriate pay for the job they do.

Thank you.