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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 Sandy Cinch and I am the Vice President of ICF Services for Hattie Larlham, which is an organization based in Mantua, Ohio. We serve over 1,300 people with intellectual disabilities in several counties across Ohio. Our services include six Intermediate Care Facilities, employment services, community homes, pre-school services and day programming, all of which are certified by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). We have been in operation since 1961 and have served several thousand people with intellectual developmental disabilities over the years.

Hattie Larlham employees stand very proud to serve children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We provide high quality services, and we operate the largest Intermediate Care Facility in Ohio. Hattie Larlham is well known in the medical community as many referrals come to us from local hospitals. We continue to receive very high accolades from those that we serve, from families of those that we serve, and from community members.

As a result of the low reimbursement rates, Hattie Larlham has been faced with staffing shortages for the past few years. This includes shortages of nurses and direct care staff who are needed on a 24/7 basis to help take care of the people we serve. Our organization continues to compete with other employers, such as Amazon and Target, who can offer starting wages at a much higher rate than we are able to offer to new employees. Our services are very much needed to continue as we offer a wide array of much needed services, which includes serving people with very complex medical issues and those who use a ventilator.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD and I am also very appreciative of the additional investments adopted by the House of Representatives in House Bill 33. House Bill 33 as passed by the House is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by Hattie Larlham. **I encourage this committee to support the House's version of H.B. 33 as it pertains to DODD appropriations. Further, I highly encourage the Senate to invest additional dollars into these vital services to help raise the direct support professional wages to at least an average of \$20.64. This investment will help us recruit and retain the workforce that is so very vital for our services.**

With your leadership, together we can ensure these services are available to the Ohioans who greatly need them.

Thank you again for the opportunity and privilege to bring my concerns before you. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I may be of any assistance in this process.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandra A. Cinch". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Sandra A. Cinch
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