



## **Testimony to the Ohio House Finance Committee**

*In Support of a Rate Increase for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)*

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Chairman Stewart, Ranking Member Sweeney and esteemed members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Scott DeLong and I am the CEO of Champaign Residential Services, Inc. (CRSI), we are headquartered in Champaign County and provide services in over 20 counties in Ohio. I am here to express our gratitude for the investment you've made in DSP wages and support in the past state operating budget and to provide support for another rate increase that would allow providers to increase wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) in Ohio. Your commitment to these vital workers has yielded tangible, positive outcomes, and I hope to demonstrate today that further investment is needed to sustain and build upon this progress. We are a dedicated provider of services serving over 400 individuals across 21 counties, we have built a compassionate and skilled team of over 700 employees who are passionate about supporting our community. We offer a range of services designed to meet the needs of varying individuals that includes ICF, In-Home Waiver Care, Remote Monitoring, Respite Services and many more services.

First, I want to take a moment to thank you for the previous investments you've made. CRSI has provided services to Ohioans with developmental disabilities for almost 50 years. As CEO, it is my job to ensure that CRSI can continue to provide our vital services today, tomorrow, and well in the future. Your attention to the needs of DSPs has led to meaningful improvements in our workforce and the quality of care we provide to individuals with developmental disabilities across Ohio. I am proud to share the following successes:

1. **Reduced Overtime:** For the first time since 2015, our overtime rate has decreased to below 17%. This is a significant improvement, demonstrating our ability to better manage staffing levels and improve the work-life balance for our DSPs.
2. **Growth in DSP Staff:** Over the past year, we have increased our DSP staff by 436 individuals and terminated 381 for a net of 55 individuals. For the first time since 2012, we have seen consistent growth in our number of employees for two consecutive years. This increase is a direct result of the previous wage enhancements, making the profession more attractive to potential employees and helping to reduce the strain on existing staff.

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3. **Decreased Turnover:** For the past two years, we have seen a decline in turnover rates. While the national average turnover rate for DSPs remains alarmingly high, we have worked hard to improve our retention, but continued support will be key to maintaining and improving these outcomes.
4. **Increased Starting Wages:** Starting rates of pay have increased by 32% over the past two years. This has been a critical factor in attracting new talent to the field and ensuring that our DSPs are compensated fairly for the vital work they do.
5. **Employee Growth:** For the first time since 2012, we have seen consistent growth in our number of employees for two consecutive years. This is a positive trend that speaks to the overall improvement in the DSP profession and the demand for quality services.

While we are grateful for the investments you've already made, there is still significant work to be done to ensure we can continue to provide quality care for Ohioans with developmental disabilities. A further increase to funding for the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to support service reimbursement rates to help us build on this momentum and address the following critical needs:

- **Sustaining Staff Growth:** The demand for DSPs continues to grow as Ohio's population ages, and individuals with developmental disabilities continue to need support. To keep pace with this demand, we cannot let the reimbursement rates and wages of DSPs remain stagnant.
- **Reducing Burnout and Improving Retention:** While turnover has decreased, it remains a challenge. A rate increase will allow us to continue offering competitive wages that help retain our skilled staff and reduce burnout.
- **Attracting New Talent:** Despite recent wage increases, we continue to face a shortage of qualified DSPs. A rate increase will allow us to compete for new talent in a competitive job market.

We are committed to ensuring that Ohioans with disabilities receive the highest quality care and support. But to achieve this, we need a workforce that is well-compensated, well-trained, and well-supported. The best way to ensure that we can continue to meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities is by continuing to invest in the workforce that supports them.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge the committee to approve a funding increase to the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities the rates for services that providers can use to offer wage increase to DSPs in Ohio. Your investment in these workers is an investment in the future of Ohioans with developmental

disabilities, and together, we can ensure a strong, sustainable, and compassionate system of care.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,  
Scott A. DeLong  
CEO  
Champaign Residential Services, Inc.