



Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget
House Finance Committee
April 3, 2025

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about Ohio's evolving system of supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I come before you with two important messages: one of **gratitude** and one focused on working together to ensure a **stable and sustainable future** for our system.

Two years ago, I addressed this body with a message of **urgency**. Our system was facing an unprecedented workforce crisis—one unlike anything we've seen before. We sought your support to stabilize our workforce, and **you responded with a clear commitment to Ohioans with developmental disabilities, their families and the providers who support them.**

Because of your dedication, we left July 2023 with hope. Hope because of your belief in us as demonstrated by your investment. The funding provided much-needed relief, and many providers have started stabilizing their workforce for the first time in years. Your support and partnership made a significant difference, and for that, we **thank you.**

We are deeply appreciative that the committee has decided to maintain the 135th General Assembly's investment by: **allowing the intermediate care facility (ICF) reimbursement formula to run as outlined in statute; continuing the professional workforce development add-on in ICFs during the first fiscal year; and continuing funding for multi-system youth, the Technology First initiative and Employment First initiative;** all of which are vital to the long-term health of the system.

We have been clear throughout the budget process that **protecting the progress from your previous investment would require and ongoing commitment and increases.** Without them, wages will stagnate and DSPs will leave for better paying jobs that offer periodic increases.

We believe small, incremental waiver rate increases are still necessary for providers to keep up with the real cost of delivering services. We would like to reiterate our ask of the members of Ohio's 135th General Assembly, specifically, in the three Medicaid Home and Community Base Services (HCBS) waivers administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities, we ask the House to:

1. **Include a rate increase for waiver providers** to keep up with the real costs of delivering service while sustaining their workforce.
 - **3.4%** increase on January 1, 2026
 - **Additional 2.3%** increase on January 1, 2027
2. **Establish a mechanism for ongoing increases** to prevent future funding crises.
 - Include proposed **language** that allows DODD to work with system partners to establish a **mechanism for ongoing increases** and prevent future funding crises.

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Finally, we respectfully request the committee provide clarification on the new language found in section 333.12 which limits Medicaid's authority to spend funds on inclusion initiatives. Community inclusion has been a fundamental principle in Ohio's developmental disabilities services and many services are built around the goal of increasing community inclusion for Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We encourage the committee to review this provision and ensure it does not limit the services provided by the system.

It is an honor to work with this committee as we work together to build a system that not only serves Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities but also leads the nation in innovation and care. We have outstanding individuals working in this field, and it is a privilege to serve those who rely on our support across this great state.

Thank you for time and commitment to Ohioans with developmental disabilities, their families, and the providers who support them

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Moore", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter J. Moore, President & CEO
Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA)