



Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget Senate Finance Committee

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Esteemed Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Ohio’s evolving system of supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). I come before you with two important messages: one of **gratitude** and one focused on how we can work 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. Working in our field is among the most challenging and rewarding jobs, but we were losing staff across the state to higher-paying positions in non-critical jobs. We sought your support to stabilize our workforce, and **you responded with a clear commitment to Ohioans** with I/DD through desperately-needed funding increases. Thank you.

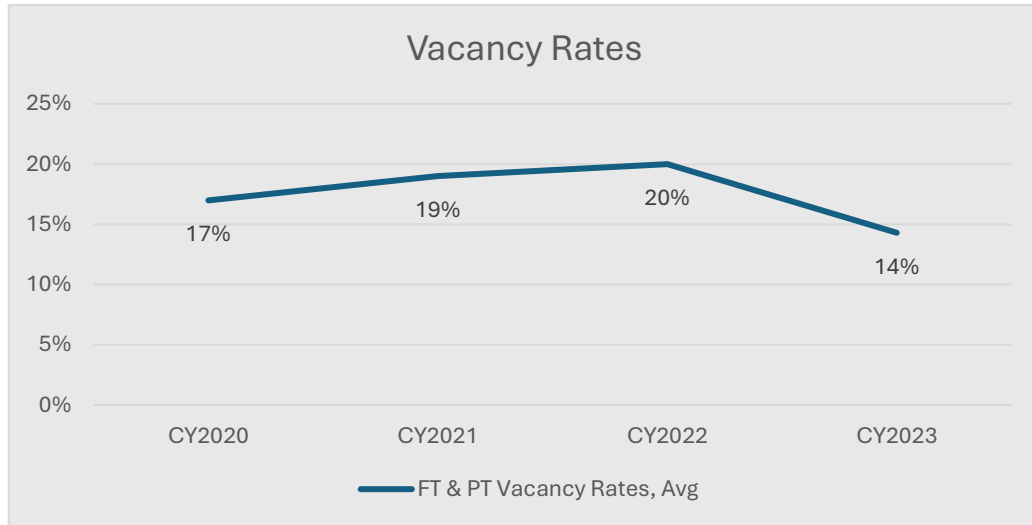
Because of your dedication, we left July 2023 with hope. Hope because of your belief in us as demonstrated by your investment. The funding we received provided much-needed relief, and many providers were able to stabilize their workforce for the first time in years. As a direct result of your belief and investment:

- **Starting wages have increased by 33%.** Before the increase, the average starting wage in our field was \$12. That number is now \$16.40.¹

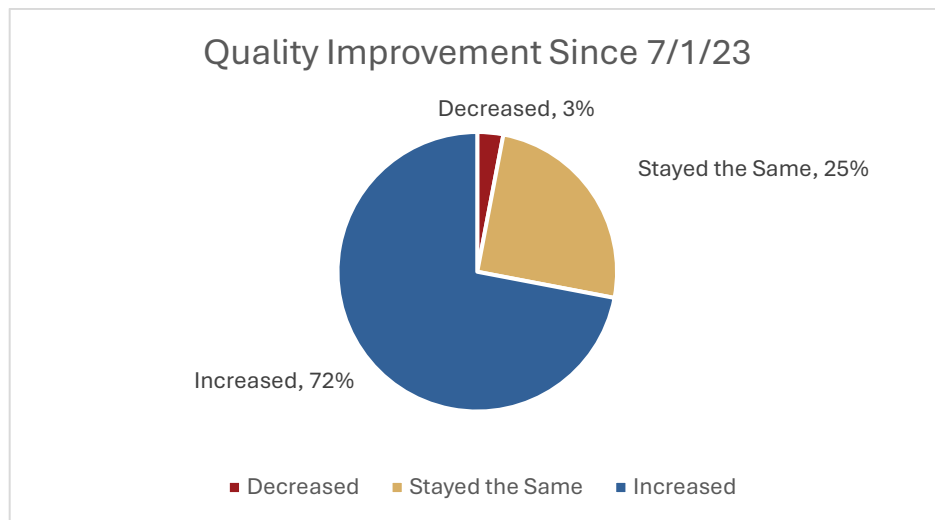


¹ [DODD 2023 Direct Support Professional \(DSP\) Compensation Survey Summary](#).

- **Vacancy rates have decreased by 33%.** Before the increase, vacancies were at 21% and climbing. That number is 14% and stabilizing today.²



- **Quality has improved.** In a survey of coalition members, 97% said their ability to provide quality services has stayed the same or improved since the rate increases went into effect.³



Your support made a significant difference, and for that, we **thank you**.

² [DODD 2023 Direct Support Professional \(DSP\) Compensation Survey Summary](#)

³ DD Budget Coalition Survey conducted 2024.

We were clear throughout the budget process that **protecting your investment** would require ongoing increases. The Governor's budget protects that investment in Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) – providing for increases in both private and public ICFs. We support and appreciate this investment. The budget does not include any such increases in home and community-based services in DODD's three I/DD-specific home and community-based services waivers.

We are asking for your support to ensure the progress we've made is not lost. We cannot slip back into the crisis we faced just two years ago. The Governor's and the House-passed budget "fills the gap" left by one-time ARPA funds, a gap we knew would need filled. It provides for wage increases in developmental centers and private ICFs and increases their rates based on inflation. We are asking for the same treatment of home and community-based services.

Specifically, on the waiver side, we are asking the General Assembly to:

1. **Include a rate increase for waiver providers** to keep up with the real costs of delivering service while sustaining their workforce.
 - 2% increase starting January 1, 2027
 - See amendment SC1053
2. **Establish a requirement for ongoing reimbursement rate reviews** to prevent future funding crises.
 - See amendment SC1023 and SC1053
3. **Convene a workgroup of I/DD stakeholders** and the General Assembly to review the current I/DD system of service and identify areas for potential modernization efforts. The workgroup will be bicameral and bipartisan and include representatives from listed partners in the I/DD system.
 - See amendment SC1225-1.

Lastly, ours is a **lifespan system** – it is not "long term services and supports" – it is life span services and support. As such, we stand behind the Governor's proposals to **support multi-system youth services** and **early intervention programs**, which are vital to the long-term health of the system and the people served by the system.

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Pete Moore/OPRA

It is an honor to stand before you today to ask for your continued support and partnership as we work together to build a system that not only serves Ohioans with I/DD 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 your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pete" and last name "Moore" clearly distinguishable.

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