



Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget Senate Medicaid Committee

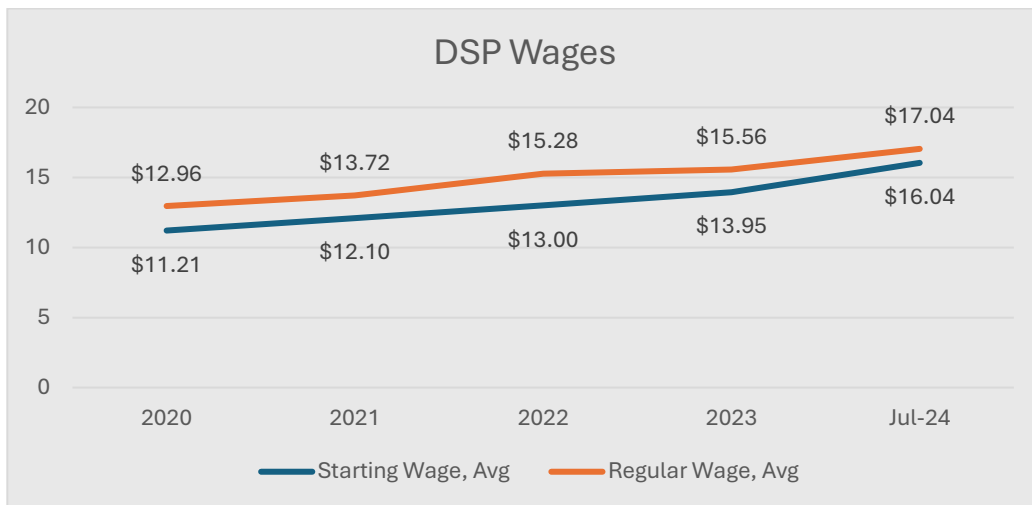
Chair Romanchuk, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston,

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/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, their families and the providers who support them. Thank you.

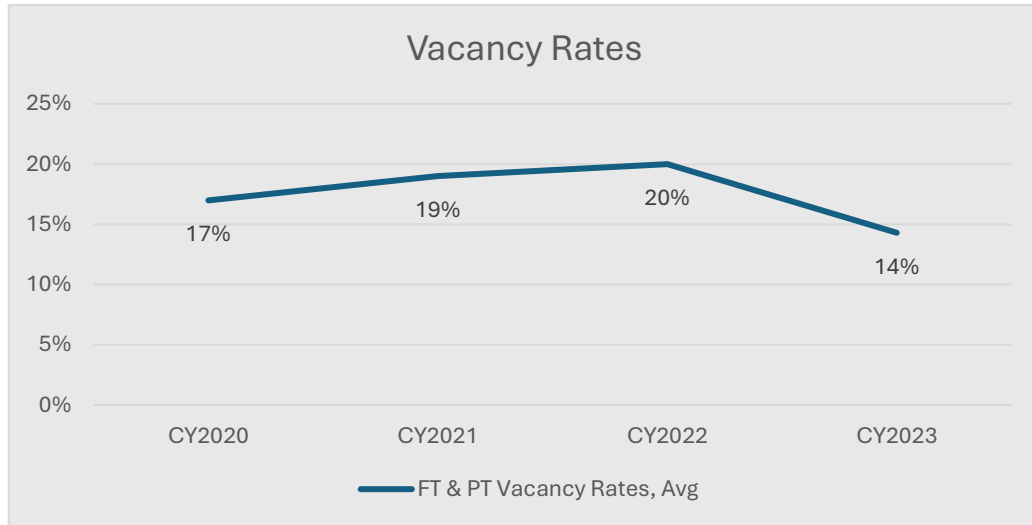
Because of your dedication, we left July 2023 with hope. Hope because of your belief in us as demonstrated by your investment. The funding we received provided much-needed relief, and many providers were able to stabilize their workforce for the first time in years. As a direct result of your belief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

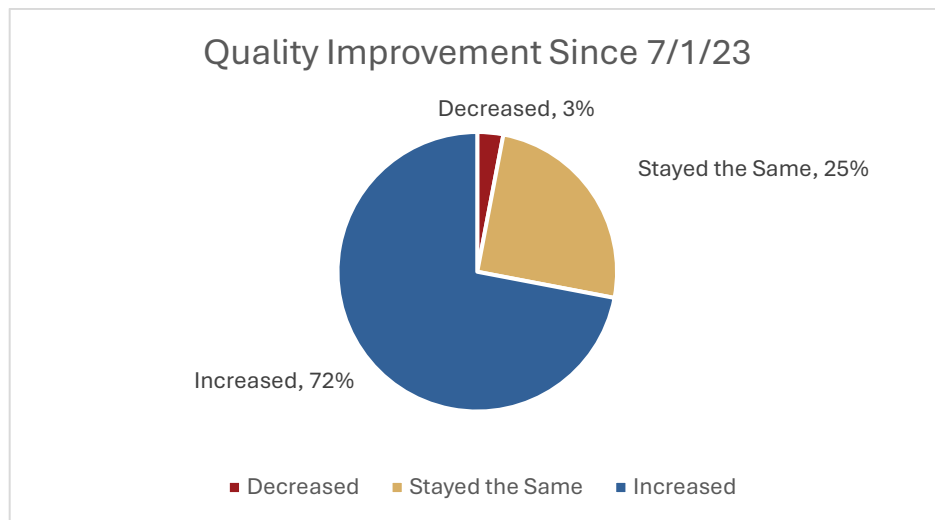


¹ [DODD 2023 Direct Support Professional \(DSP\) Compensation Survey Summary.](#)

- **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.

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.
 - **3%** increase starting January 1, 2026
 - **Additional 2%** increase on July 1, 2026
2. **Establish a requirement for ongoing reimbursement rate reviews** to prevent future funding crises.
 - Include proposed **language** that allows the General Assembly to work with system partners to establish a **process for a data-based rate review** the administration and General Assembly can use during the budget making process

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.

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.

HB96 Testimony – Senate Medicaid
Pete Moore/OPRA

In the coming testimony, you will hear directly from the people whose lives are impacted by the decisions you make. They will share their stories of workforce stabilization and how workforce stabilization translates to improved services. They will emphasize the fragility of the system's current state and the need to maintain momentum in our efforts. These are individuals of integrity, fully dedicated to ensuring that people with I/DD receive the care they need and deserve.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter J. Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "P" and "M".

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