



FINANCE COMMITTEE

WITNESS FORM

Today's Date: 6/11/2015

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Representing: Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Testifying on bill number: HB64

Testifying as: ___ Proponent
 ___ Opponent
 __X__ Interested Party

Are you a registered lobbyist? ___ YES __X__ NO

Are you submitting written testimony? __X__ YES ___ NO

Comments: _____

Senate Finance Committee

Testimony of Superintendent William Green Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

June 11, 2015

Chairman Oelslager, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the Finance Committee, my name is Bill Green. I am the superintendent of the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities. We support 3,350 people with disabilities and our mission is to connect these individuals and their families with the services they need.

The Developmental Disability system was optimistic when Governor Kasich proposed his budget because it was truly transformational with its \$45 million increase in year one and \$102 million in year two over FY15 amounts. The specific funding for new home and community based services waivers went from \$184 million in FY15 to \$279 million in FY17 in support of those receiving – and those waiting for waivers. That is an increase of \$95 million in funding for this area, which will support 3,000 additional waivers to address people who are on waiting lists. We have the highest respect for the House's subsequent adoption of the Legislative Services Commission's cost projections. However, by doing so this cuts DODD's GRF Medicaid Services line by \$33 million. We respectfully ask that you fully fund the Department of Developmental Disabilities Budget in HB 64, which includes restoring the \$12 million in FY16 and \$21 Million in FY17 within the DODD Medicaid Services Line (GRF 407).

Additionally, we know that tangible personal property tax phase out will occur. We do request to be held harmless if at all possible by including \$40 million in the DODD waiver match line. The House budget funded this line at \$20 million, which is identified for Tangible Personal Property Tax Relief. Given the system transformation, we are going through, we would like to not see this affected.

E Pluribus Unum is the motto that the Continental Congress adopted in 1782 for the United States. This motto appears on every U.S. coin and dollar that exists today. Yet, the depths of its meaning does not always penetrate our day to day lives; E Pluribus Unum – “out of many, one.” We know we are a melting pot made up of different nationalities, ethnicities, and religions that make up this great nation. We also know that within that “many” are people with disabilities. Today, I will be using this sentiment similar to its original purpose, but I will also use it to make points about the developmental disability service delivery system and the importance of providing full access for people with disabilities to every aspect of our community.

I am going to be talking about the 91,000 people with disabilities that live within the State of Ohio. For people with disabilities, they still face attitudinal barriers, stigmas, and misconceptions that limit full access for them to our neighborhoods, our schools, our churches, and our workplaces. Yes, we are a far cry away from the work done by parents, advocates, and local communities in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s to develop schools for students with disabilities, when there were no other options, sheltered workshops when there was no other work, or large institutions when there was nowhere else to live. Though our system has made great strides, one of the continuing challenges faced, is people see a person with a disability for what they cannot do, rather than what they can do, hence limiting basic guarantees of independence, freedom of choice, and control of their lives.

I informed a group of self-advocates I was with on Saturday night about this testimony and asked them what they would want you to know about them. Here are some of the things that they had to say: “I am not my disability.” “I have hopes and dreams just like everyone else.” “I want to be with those that love me.” “I want to be accepted for who I am.” “I have friends.” “I go to church.” “I have a job.” “I learn differently.” “I am like everyone else – I laugh and cry and want to make a difference.” What I heard, is common to us all. They seek love, acceptance, respect, and a life of meaning and significance.

This is where we come in. How do we create a service delivery system that supports a person with a disability to have a good life? Our system is under a great amount of stress given recent federal mandates that will be phased in over the next 4 to 10 years. The most significant mandate requires that people with disabilities and their services are delivered in such a way that fosters inclusion and community participation. On March 19, 2019, the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services will no longer reimburse services that are segregated and where people with disabilities are kept separate from the communities in which they live.

This present time is transformational for us, which is stressing our present system as we build a new one that will foster more inclusion and community participation for people with disabilities. When you look at the developmental disability service delivery system, whether present, or what we will become, it is helpful to look at how we are put together. We are made up of essentially four broad roles: Funding, Planning, Providers, and Monitoring. I will address each in turn.

The first role is **Funding**. County Boards through local levies provide \$xx into the DD system. We receive \$xx through the State of Ohio and \$xx through Federal Medicaid participation. Presently, County Boards are funding the majority of Medicaid waiver services for people with disabilities using a combination of state and local revenue sources and this is why we were so grateful for Governor Kasich’s proposed budget. It was going to further assist our local efforts to provide more waivers to people who need them.

The second role is **Planning** – CBs through our service and support administration function are responsible for being that single point of coordination for each person with a disability that needs support. So you may question, how do we serve the 91,000 people? E Pluribus Unum – out of many, one. We literally are responsible for serving one person at a time. We do this by the development of the person centered plan that is reflective of the person’s hopes and dreams as well as what is important to; and for them. For those who are unable to communicate verbally, their family, friends, and circle of support assist us with this process. This is statutory requirement for county boards of developmental disabilities and our service and support administrator function.

The third role is the **Provider** - This is where services and supports are delivered so that people with disabilities can be included within our communities. Providers are the very hands and feet of the system. Again, E Pluribus Unum - *Out of many, one*. This is where the rubber hits the road and how a person with a disability lives a good life. By the support and encouragement of someone that accepts and assists people with disabilities obtain what is important to; and for them. We have a plan and the provider carries it out.

I emphasize again the funding for the Department of Developmental Disabilities here and restoring the \$33 million to the DODD Medicaid Services line that will also be used to provide a 6% waiver rate increase to support direct support professionals, which will aid in recruiting and retaining a workforce that supports people with disabilities regardless of their complex

behavioral and medical challenges. It is a sad commentary that direct support professionals are not able to earn a living wage given present waiver rates.

With provider role, we request your support of the House approved provisions pertaining to Intermediate Care Facilities and the downsizing initiative to move people from institutional settings to home and community based services. We need the home and community based services waivers to move this system forward and to provide more independence, freedom of choice, and control of their lives.

I was the superintendent of Apple Creek Developmental Center when it closed and went through the Developmental Center Closure Commission that was established at that time. The Commission is truly a duplication of efforts already completed by experts in the field. It prolongs and exacerbates upset that already exists and delays planning by individuals, families and guardians. It is obligatory that the closures of developmental centers continue given their capacity to ensure that they are used as regional resources and not as lifelong residences. If we use the hospital analogy, developmental centers are the intensive care units of our system and should be used for short term stabilization. We request that the Closure Commission language be removed from the budget.

The fourth role is **Monitoring** – The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and each county board monitors individuals and providers to ensure that they are meeting each person's needs as well as their person centered plan is being implemented. This is the check and balance to the service delivery system to ensure people's health, safety, and welfare. When incidents that adversely affect health and safety, investigations occur and the provider must put in to place immediate actions and preventative measures to ensure each person is safe.

Funder, Planner, Provider, and Monitor are roles that make up our service delivery system.

Let us end, where we began. E Pluribus Unum – out of many, one. Help us transform our system to include people with disabilities in every aspect of life: home, work, school, recreation, and faith. People with disabilities are a part of the "many" that make up the United States of America. With your help, we can have the citizens of Ohio with disabilities take their rightful place as equals in our communities.

On behalf of the service delivery system, we thank you for your leadership and support of the 91,000 people with disabilities that live in our communities.

I welcome your questions.