



# Department of Developmental Disabilities

Mike DeWine, Governor  
Jeff Davis, Director

## Ohio Senate Health Committee Testimony in Support of Governor DeWine's FY 22-23 Operating Budget

Director Jeff Davis  
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Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chairman Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Ohio Senate Health committee. My name is Jeff Davis, Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). It is nice to be with you once again and to present Governor Mike DeWine's budget priorities for DODD. I am grateful for the interest and commitment many of you have shown to your community members with developmental disabilities and their families. It is an honor to be with you today and to partner with you on investments and initiatives to better support Ohioans with developmental disabilities.

I am appreciative of the budget Governor DeWine has introduced for the department and Ohio's developmental disabilities service delivery system. I would like to thank the Governor and his staff, especially Director Murnieks and her team at OBM for their thoughtful consideration and guidance through this process.

### **DODD Overview**

Ohio's developmental disabilities (DD) system supports over 95,000 Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. The system has two core functions: 1) the daily supports provided by direct support professionals (DSPs) and 2) service and support administration, also known as case management. DODD has prioritized efforts with system partners to focus more on the person supported by improving these two core functions.

DODD has a committed and engaged community of stakeholders who partner to implement and improve a system of supports across the lifespan. The system is

constructed with DODD as the single state agency and with 88 county boards of disabilities who generate levy funding and perform the case management function. Thousands of small business providers and DSPs carry out the person's service plan through daily supports. Ohio additionally has a broad group of advocates that bring perspective and feedback to collaborate with DODD.

The mission of DODD is to improve the quality of life for Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. DODD envisions an integrated system that helps and empowers people to live their best life. DODD is committed to customer experience focused on core values, including kindness and empathy, collaboration, transparency, innovation, quality, inclusiveness, and accountability. DODD strives to lead a large system with all its complexity to be focused on each person we support.

The department and county boards of developmental disabilities leverage federal funding to provide people Medicaid waivers. The department delivers residential support for people living in state developmental centers. The department oversees private intermediate care facilities (ICFs) who provide residential supports. The department coordinates statewide support to infants and toddlers with disabilities or developmental delays through the Early Intervention program. The department supports private Medicaid providers through technical assistance and support, certification, licensing, and reviews. The department supports families, providers, and county boards through further initiatives and a culture of providing exceptional customer experience.

## **Budget Overview**

DODD's budget recommendations are a continuation of investments and priorities of the previous budget. The FY20-21 budget invested heavily in Ohio's DD system and I am proud to present to the General Assembly a budget that continues those investments and creates additional targeted investments. This budget allows the department to continue bold changes to strengthen our service delivery system. I will begin by outlining the fiscal impact of these provisions and then provide additional detail on key initiatives.

- Maintains FY21 Medicaid reimbursement rates for home and community-based services (HCBS) and Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) services. These two Medicaid service options differ in their reimbursement methods. On the HCBS side, services are reimbursed under a fee for service model where reimbursement rates are

approved by CMS (and codified in administrative rule) by service and provider type. HCBS reimbursement rates do not change unless the fee schedule for a service is change and approved. ICFs are different in that their rate methodology is found in ORC and a per diem rate is formulated based on cost reports. That statutory formula is projected to increase ICF expenditures by approximately \$50 million over the FY 19/21biennium. To continue at the overall FY21 ICF rate, there is budget language that sets an average daily rate for ICFs. It is important to note that these Medicaid rates are the sole source of revenue for providers to pay their DSPs.

- Provides \$1M in new funding in FY22 to strengthen the state's efforts in the use of innovative technology for more Ohioans with developmental disabilities to be fully integrated into their community and live with greater independence.
- Continues investment from the previous budget that doubled state funding for Early Intervention to support Ohio's children and families. This budget maintains that investment with \$22.3 in each fiscal year.
- Increases investment in supports for multi-system youth and their families by \$10.5M over the biennium. This is achieved by an investment of \$4.5M in DODD's dedicated Multi-System Youth line and \$6M into DODD's Medicaid Services line to support options that maximize federal financial participation.
- Satisfies the Ball v. DeWine settlement agreement by maintaining funding for 700 state-funded IO waivers as well as continuing to support affordable housing and integrated day and employment services.

## **1. Strengthening the DSP Workforce**

Ohio's provider system is made up of primarily small businesses. These small businesses employ approximately 50,000 Ohioans as DSPs. According to research<sup>1</sup>, 90% of DSPs are women, 30% are African American, 40% rely on public assistance, 85% live <400% of the federal poverty level, 72% live <300% of the federal poverty level, 51% live <200% federal poverty level, and 21% live <100% of the federal poverty level. We believe it is imperative to continue to invest in this workforce to maintain Ohio's great system of supports. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic and economic situation has disproportionality impacted minorities and lower wage earners.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration (2018). *The Direct Support Workforce: A Crisis or Serious Systems Flaw?* [PowerPoint slides] <https://nisonger.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Hewitt-Nisonger-5.24.18-handout-version.pdf>

DSPs are foundational to our DD community by providing daily supports to people with developmental disabilities. DODD recognizes and values the DSP profession and has committed resources to develop and support this important workforce. The department has embarked on initiatives to better train and support DSPs, to assist providers in the recruitment, training, and retention of DSPs, and to communicate and provide resources directly to DSPs.

Two years ago, the Governor's budget introduced an historic rate increase targeted to increase the compensation of DSPs. Not only was the increase a historic number, but it was also a historic partnership that leveraged both state and local county boards of developmental disabilities funding. This state and local partnership receives federal match to create a higher investment. Further, both the House and the Senate joined the partnership by not only supporting the as-introduced budget but by increasing the investment. Those investments were implemented in two phases, a larger increase on January 1, 2020, and the second phase of the increase on January 1, 2021.

That investment and the continuation of it in this budget is critical to supporting small business providers and their employees. Better experiences are achieved through daily supports when we invest efforts and funding to support DSPs and when we support providers in recruiting, training, and retaining staff.

## **2. Investing in Innovative Technology**

Governor DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted have made innovative technology a priority of their administration. DODD has embraced technology across our operations and service delivery system. Internal focus on customer experience has led department efforts to create IT systems and processes that better meet the needs of our partner customers. Better IT systems also free up energy and resources for the department and partners to focus on individual supports. DODD has also leveraged technology to support people with developmental disabilities and DSPs.

Many Ohioans with developmental disabilities encounter obstacles in daily tasks and activities, including accessing education and jobs. Technology can help people to overcome these barriers and live fuller lives. Technology First is an initiative to ensure that people with developmental disabilities have increased opportunities to live, work, and thrive in their homes and communities. This is achieved through state-of-the-art planning, innovative technology, and supports that focus on their talents, interests, and skills.

Supports generally fall into two types. First, remote supports utilize cameras, sensors, and similar technology to supplement or replace in-home staff. Secondly, assistive technology devices and equipment that meet one or many daily needs. Assistive technology can be off-the-shelf technology like popular voice recognition smart devices, or a specific device developed for a person's needs. These services are currently services offered in DODD waivers but more needs to be done to increase awareness, access, and acceptance.

This budget invests \$1 million to further innovative technology in Ohio's DD system. This dedicated one-time funding will allow the department to provide local grant funding and to implement strategies to increase access and utilization of technology for Ohioans with developmental disabilities. DODD also has language in the budget that would create a Technology First Task Force to bring together representatives from InnovateOhio, technology experts, people with disabilities, and other state agencies to coordinate and implement technology solutions for people with developmental disabilities across service delivery systems.

### **3. Investing in Early Intervention**

DODD administers Ohio's Part C Early Intervention Program. EI is a statewide system that provides coordinated early intervention services to parents of eligible children under the age of three with developmental delays or disabilities. EI is grounded in the philosophy that young children learn best from familiar people in familiar settings. Every family served in EI will have a local EI team that consists of a service coordinator, service providers, and the family.

Prior to Governor DeWine's FY20-21 budget investment, funding for Ohio's Early Intervention program had for years remained flat while demand increased. FY20-21 budget investments doubled state funding for EI and supported Governor DeWine's children's initiative platform to ensure the best start in life for every Ohio child. The investment also allowed DODD to expand services to children with lead exposure and neonatal abstinence syndrome. In large measure, funding was distributed to local Family Children and Family Councils. Continuing this important investment reaffirms Ohio's commitment to Ohio's children and families.

### **4. Supporting Multi-System Youth**

Many youths who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and co-occurring mental or behavioral health conditions are eligible for and receive support from county boards of developmental disabilities, but due to multiple factors, they may not be

connected to other agencies or services . However, about one-third to one-half of the youth who are served by the county board system also have a co-occurring mental or behavioral health condition. DODD has partnered with county boards and in coordination with other state agencies to support youth with complex needs. The ultimate goal is to support these youth and their families with resources that allow the youth to remain with their families and in their communities.

In this current biennium, DODD has implemented and supported many projects and initiatives to support youth with complex needs.

- DODD and OhioMHAS created the System of Care ECHO for multi-system youth. ECHO sessions occur once a week and include a brief didactic and a case presentation from a local team that is heard by a panel of clinicians with expertise in trauma, psychiatry, pediatrics, autism, parent peer support, and systems of care, as well as individuals across child-serving systems. This gives local teams who are struggling to support a youth in their home and community an opportunity to share the situation and receive back recommendations.
- DODD partners with Wright State University & Access Ohio Mental Health Center of Excellence to provide telepsychiatry services for youth who are enrolled in Medicaid with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and intellectual disability. This statewide initiative provides this much needed service to youth and families at no cost to families.
- DODD awarded seven grants across 13 counties for Planned Respite and In-Home supports for youth with complex behavioral health needs. The planned respite grants are local collaborative projects among county boards of developmental disabilities, councils of government, DD providers, Ohio Family & Children First, and mental health agencies. We know that respite efforts provide a much-needed break for the youth and their families.
- DODD awarded a contract to ViaQuest to provide a structured program with a rate add-on for the use of ICF beds for short-term residential supports. Via Quest expects to open this new residential setting in March of this year. DODD intends to expand this program to other ICF providers and implement lessons learned from this initial contract.

Further investments in Multi-System Youth will allow the department to continue and expand these initiatives. Additional projects will support local teams through capacity building, training, resources, and support from the state. One way the department will accomplish this is by offering a multi-disciplinary teaming approach to support youth and their families and providers with complex needs. DODD will invest in community, in-home, and short-term residential supports to keep youth with their families and in their communities. The department will also make available mental health trainings for providers.

## **Conclusion**

Chairman Huffman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide a high-level overview of Governor DeWine's budget for the Department of Developmental Disabilities. I look forward to the continued dialog and partnership in these important investments and initiatives. I am now happy to answer any questions you have.