



HEALTH
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 5/3/2021

Name: Roger Fortener

Address: 1525 Eber Road

Holland, Ohio 43528

Telephone: 419 866 6500

Organization Representing: Anne Grady Services

Testifying on Bill Number: HB 110

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: For testimony on 5/6

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and esteemed Members of the Senate Health Committee,

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit written testimony to the Committee today on HB 110. My name is Roger Fortener and I am the Executive Director at Anne Grady Services. We are located in Lucas County. We are a not for profit business that provides supports for over 200 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and we employ about 400 staff. We offer a variety of services, including direct supports for our individuals who live in our ICF center, ICF group homes and in our Supported Living Program, day services, a full transportation service, physical and occupational services and respite. I write today to encourage the Committee to increase funding for services administered by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Since the start of the pandemic, the number of new staff we have been able to hire has significantly declined, negatively impacting our ability to continue to deliver services in the same way we have in the past. In my near 40 years in this field, I have never seen it so difficult to hire staff. In spite of ramped up efforts to show appreciation to staff and reward them for their loyalty, we have continued to lose staff one by one, causing us to currently employ less staff than ever before.

These workforce changes have forced us to make changes in the way we deliver services, as well as our ability to take advantage of opportunities to expand our services. It has been necessary to scale down services, especially in our day programs and transportation program. Prior to the Pandemic, we served over 300 Ohioans with disabilities; today that number is about 200.

The House's version of HB 110 makes a small investment in day services for Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. While any investment in these services is welcomed, I believe there is still more the General Assembly can do to ensure the sustainability and accessibility of services for Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Additional investments means providers like us having the ability to raise pay rates for staff and provide additional services to individuals we serve, as well as to expand and grow our programs.

Our staff have done amazing and heroic things since the pandemic began, but they are tired, emotionally exhausted and need help. I encourage you to add the following initiatives into Ohio's biennium budget to best support my staff, my services, and the Ohioans we support:

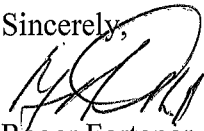


Increase general revenue fund appropriations in the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities budget to fund much needed rate increases for homemaker and personal care, day, vocational and employment services, nonmedical transportation, respite services, and:

- Allow a temporary change in statute to alter the ICF reimbursement rate calculations for the first year of the biennium.
Support the creation of a task force to address our system's workforce challenges.

With your leadership, together we can ensure these services are available to the Ohioans that so greatly need them! **Thank you again, for the opportunity and privilege to bring my concerns before you and if I can ever be of any help in this process, please let me know.**

Sincerely,



Roger Fortener, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Anne Grady Services
rfortener@annegrady.org
419-866-6500 x287



DIGNITY
RESPECT
QUALITY

P.O. BOX 1297
HOLLAND, OH 43528
419.866.6500