



**THE EPILEPSY CENTER
OF NORTHWEST OHIO**

*Serving People with Seizure Disorders
and
Those with Developmental Disabilities*

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**Testimony on HB 110
Ohio Senate Finance Committee
May 13th, 2021**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Minority Member Sykes and esteemed Members of the Senate Finance 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 Roy Cherry and I am the CEO of The Epilepsy Center of Northwest Ohio, and we are located in Maumee, Ohio and operate in Lucas and Wood County. We are a not for profit that provides supports for over 45 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and have over 100 employees.

Here at The Epilepsy Center we provide a wide range of services that depend on Medicaid funding exclusively. This includes caring for the individuals in a residential setting, providing adult day services, transportation and money management. We have continued to reinvest in our agency's employees striving to increase the direct support professional wage, as we understand the importance of their position to the system. With continued increases in funding, we have been able to manage this and provide excellent care to individuals with developmental disabilities.

I write today to encourage the Committee to increasing funding for services administered by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Traditionally it has been difficult to retain good Direct Support Professionals, however, prior to the pandemic we would hold open interviews and consistently get a large number of applicants, in which we would hire a consistent number of new employees. Since the pandemic the open interviews have become less successful with very few people showing up. With turnover consistently over 50% for this industry, less applicants means less new hires and more open shifts. This creates burden on our current work force as they work longer hours which can potentially effect the care they give to our most vulnerable population.

With difficulties in finding Direct Support Professionals and filling open shifts, this has prevented our agency in expanding services and thus more and more individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities not receiving services.

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 investment in the system allows us to increase staff wages in order to hire more qualified Direct Support Professionals and provide more services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

My 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 amendment SC 2290 into the HB 110 to support the following initiatives 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 shared living under the three Home and Community Based Services waivers administered by DODD.
- Increase general revenue fund appropriations in DODD's budget to support the reimbursement formula for intermediate care facilities (ICF).
 - 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.**



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