

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 03/28/2023

Name: Roy J. Cherry

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): The Epilepsy Center of Northwest Ohio

Position/Title: CEO

Address: 1701 Holland Road

City: Maumee State: OH Zip: 43537

Best Contact Telephone: 4198675950 Email: rcherry@epilepsycenter.org

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 33

Specific Issue: Department of Developmental Disabilities

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? Written testimony only

Please provide a brief statement on your position: I support the budget initiatives outlined by DODD and OOD and encourage the sub-committee to include additional investments for these important services.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.



**THE EPILEPSY CENTER
OF NORTHWEST OHIO**

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

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Testimony on SFY 24/25 Operating Budget House Finance Committee

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeny, and esteemed committee members,

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

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 provide services in Lucas and Wood County. We are an organization that provides various services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These services include residential care in their homes, day programs, vocational services teaching them work skills, and transportation. In addition, we are the representative payee for over 400 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. All of these services are administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of 120 employees are proud to provide essential services to the 60 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities residentially, 55 in day programs and the over 400 we provide rep payee services for.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD. The changing labor landscape and accompanying shortage of workers, including direct support professionals (DSP), threatens our ability to provide the critical supports on which our people we serve and their families rely. The budget proposed in HB 33 is a good foundation to help our system combat these many changes.

Because of the low reimbursement for our services it becomes difficult to attract and keep good employees to provide these services. Many times, our DSPs don't last 6 months in pursuit of higher paying jobs. With the number of open shifts that we have open every week, it cost us extra dollars to incentivize staff to pick up these shifts due to the shortage. This has cost the agency several thousands of dollars. In addition, due to the high turnover, we are continuously recruiting and hiring. This takes up an enormous amount of time and cost. The DSPs are critical to providing the highest quality of life for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the fact that providers cannot pay them what they truly deserve is tragic.



The Governor's proposed budget initiatives, guided by the leadership of Director Hauck is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by The Epilepsy Center of Northwest Ohio. With these budget initiatives, Ohioans with disabilities will continue to receive the vital employment services organizations like mine provide. **We encourage this committee to approve the Governor's budget proposal for DODD and to invest additional dollars through budget amendment HC0656 into these vital services to raise direct support professional wages to at least an average of \$20.64.**

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 today.**



Roy J. Cherry

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The Epilepsy Center of Northwest Ohio