



Department of Developmental Disabilities

Mike DeWine, Governor
Kimberly Hauck, Director

Ohio House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services Governor DeWine's FY 24-25 Operating Budget

**Director Kim Hauck
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities**

March 14, 2023

Chairwoman Carruthers, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Ohio House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, my name is Kim Hauck and I serve as Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Thank you for the opportunity to present Governor Mike DeWine's budget recommendations for Ohio's developmental disabilities system. I also want to thank you and your colleagues for supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Together, Governor DeWine's administration and the Ohio General Assembly have made significant strides to address wages. We have established a technology first initiative to increase independence and access. We have also collaborated on a continuum of care for Ohio's youngest and youth with complex needs.

Background

At DODD, our mission is to improve the quality of life for Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. DODD oversees a statewide system of services that focuses on ensuring health and safety and providing opportunities for living a good life. We do this by honoring choice, offering a range of service options, promoting independence and access to community participation, embracing technology, and increasing opportunities for meaningful employment.

Ohio has a proud tradition of supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families. Our constituency is represented well by strong advocacy and passion. It is led by people with developmental disabilities, families and guardians, county boards of developmental disabilities, small business providers, direct support professionals, and others.

Perspectives of People with Developmental Disabilities and their Families

To understand our system better, it is best to start with the perspective of people with developmental disabilities (DD) and their families. The DD system was founded on efforts of families that collectively came together to support each other and advocate for a system of care for their loved ones. That foundation has grown over the years into a robust system that pays for the needed medical and daily care. Our structure today is a vital option for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Finding out during a prenatal exam, during a pediatrician visit, or after an accident that your loved one has a developmental disability is a life event that is not typically expected. Because of this, families have not traditionally planned for the additional financial commitment that comes with having a disability. It is hard for most to fully empathize with the high level of medical, behavioral, financial, and other daily care that are required beyond what other families typically provide for their children.

People living with developmental disabilities face a range of barriers that can limit their ability to fully participate in society. These barriers can be related to daily living, health care, education, employment, community access, and finances. All of these barriers can combine to create significant challenges for people with disabilities in their daily lives.

People with developmental disabilities and their families often face long-term emotional, social, physical, and economic demands that must be met

with comprehensive care. We must ensure those supports are available to meet the unique needs of the family and the person with developmental disabilities across their lifespan. I know that through your service to your communities and through this budget process, you have and will meet many Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families.

During this budget process, and especially during March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, we recognize that people with developmental disabilities contribute so much to our communities and our entire state. The advocacy, community participation, passions, and the contributions they add make a tremendous impact on our state. It truly is a privilege to serve at DODD under the leadership of Governor DeWine and to partner with the General Assembly in further prioritizing people with developmental disabilities, their families, and the professionals who are committed to supporting them.

Service Delivery Structure

DODD and Ohio's DD system support people with developmental disabilities and their families through the lifespan and with a continuum of services and supports based on individual need and choice. Ohio's DD system helps nearly 100,000 Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families through two core functions: 1) the daily assistance provided by direct support professionals (DSP), other providers, and through technology, and 2) service and support administration, also known as case management at the local level.

Each county in Ohio is served by a county board of developmental disabilities, which raises local levy dollars and assesses and plans for services and supports to people. DODD is charged with supporting county boards by providing oversight, training, and technical assistance. Local funds are used in partnership with state funds to pay for Medicaid assistance, which results in a significant return on investment due to the federal match. Every \$1 Ohio spends on DD Medicaid assistance, brings back \$0.64 to Ohio from the federal government.

DODD administers three different home and community-based services (HCBS) waivers: the Individual Options (IO) Waiver, the Level One Waiver, and Self-Empowered Life Funding (SELF) Waiver. Enrolling in one of these HCBS waivers is one way people access services that are planned for and provided through a person-centered process. More than 40,000 Ohioans with developmental disabilities are enrolled in a waiver, with access to services while living independently, with family, a roommate, or a paid support staff. Common services include homemaker/personal care, adult day and employment assistance, technology, transportation, and respite. For all services, a person with developmental disabilities and their team have the right to select the provider of their choice.

Another option that people living with developmental disabilities or their families may choose in Ohio is an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF). Over 4,500 people receive a bundle of services by living in ICFs of various sizes. That bundle of services include medical, nursing, and personal care services along with supporting daily living, social, and recreational activities. ICFs are funded per bed through a reimbursement formula that is based on their costs.

DODD serves more than 600 Ohioans at state-operated ICFs called developmental centers. Ohio's eight developmental centers offer temporary residential placement for people with developmental disabilities who are in crisis, cannot be served in their community, or who are ordered by the court to reside there. While at a developmental center, residents work with staff trained in trauma-informed care practices to develop a person-centered plan for services that will help them transition to living in a less intensive, community setting whenever possible.

Ohio's service delivery system is made up of thousands of small businesses that are certified as HCBS waiver agencies, independent providers, or ICFs. More than 50,000 DSPs are employed through these provider types to provide assistance at a residential facility, the person's home, in the

community, or at their place of work. DSPs play an essential role in the DD system by ensuring health and safety, providing people with developmental disabilities assistance and support with daily living tasks, promoting independence, and enabling them to live fulfilling lives in their communities.

A DSP can be expected in a one-on-one setting to administer medications, assist with cooking and eating, transport, and much more. They also provide emotional support, assist with communication, and facilitate access to community resources and activities. Each DSP plays a unique role that is shaped by the specific needs of the person they support, the location of the support, and the type of services provided.

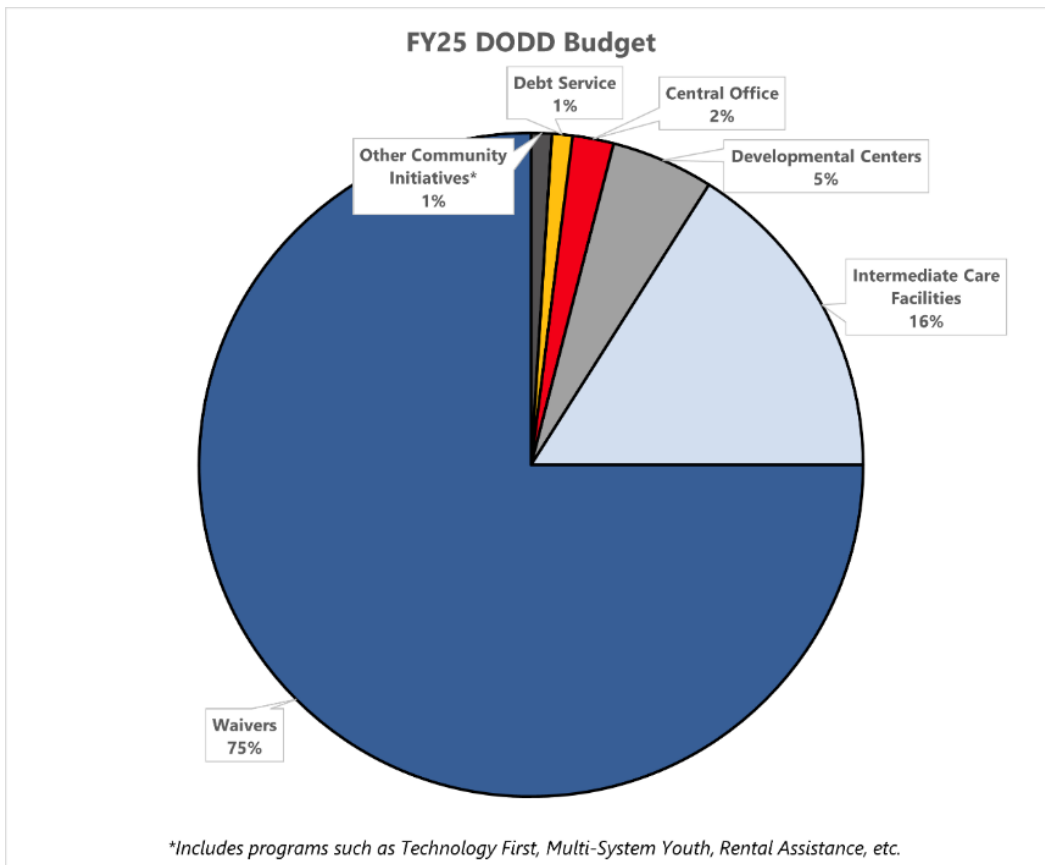
DODD has many other programs and initiatives to improve the lives of Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. Some of our other key services and initiatives include:

- DODD partners with county board and other local providers to support over 25,000 of Ohio's youngest through Early Intervention (EI). EI is a statewide system that provides in-home, coordinated services at no cost to parents of eligible children under the age of 3 with developmental delays or disabilities.
- DODD collaborates with partners to assist youth with complex needs by recognizing a continuum of care but focusing on keeping youth with their families.
- DODD partners with county boards and local non-profit housing organizations to build, purchase, and renovate affordable community housing.
- DODD has established a Technology First initiative to make available, promote, and ensure that innovative technology is considered part of all service plans for people with developmental disabilities.

Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Budget Overview

I am very grateful for Governor DeWine's overwhelming backing for people with developmental disabilities and their families. This budget proposal is

structurally balanced while meeting key priorities of our community. Budget priorities for DODD focus on ensuring a strong workforce by increasing wages for DSPs, initiatives for innovative technology, and assisting youth with complex needs. DODD’s proposed budget increases by 4% in fiscal year 2024 and 5.2% in fiscal year 2025.



This budget proposal will have an immediate and long-lasting impact for Ohio’s DD system. I’d like to highlight areas of Governor DeWine’s budget proposal that will greatly benefit Ohioans with developmental disabilities.

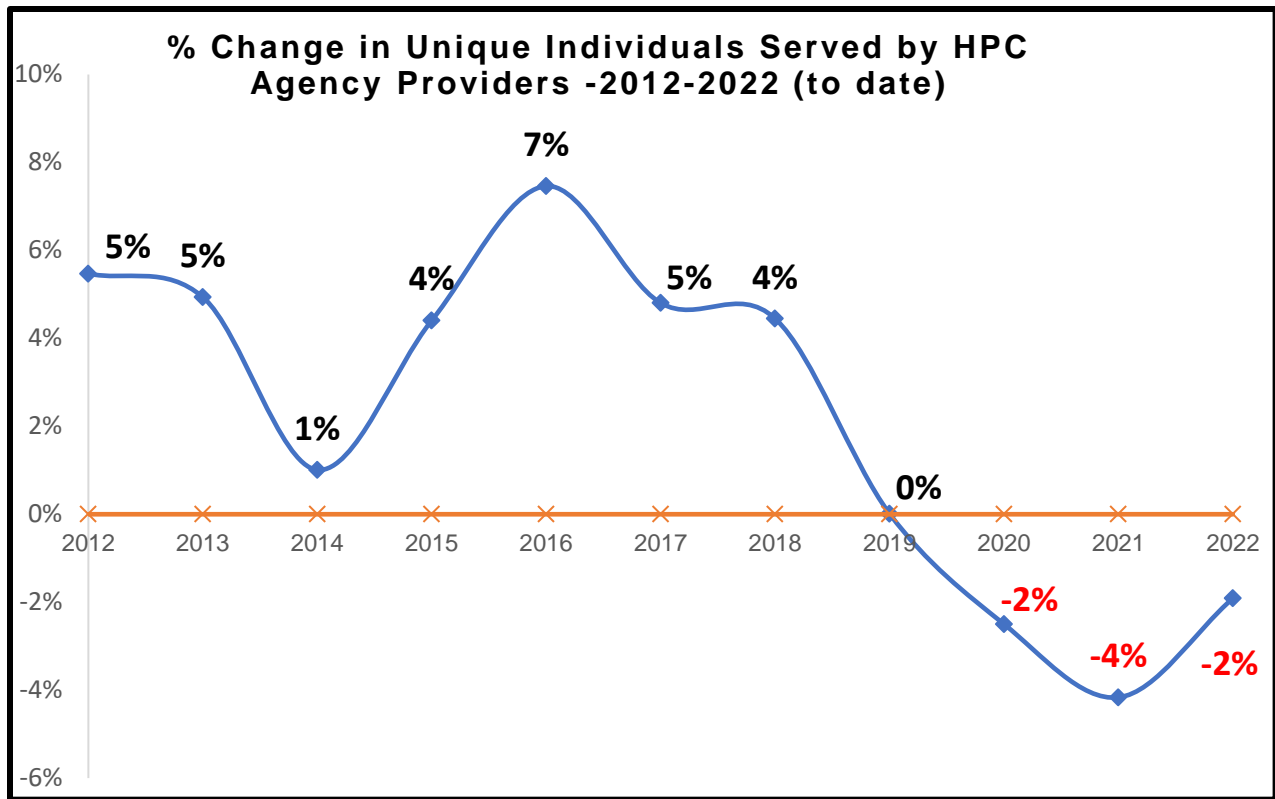
Supporting Critical DSP Workforce

The budget addresses the most pressing issue in our DD system: the availability of direct care workers for Ohioans with disabilities. Ohio's DD system has struggled to recruit, retain, and invest in this essential workforce.

People with disabilities and their families primarily rely on Medicaid services that pay DSPs to provide assistance. Other help or family and community aid may be available for some. However, for the extensive residential and daily support often needed, Medicaid is the only realistic option for families. These are robust options, but very little exists for people with disabilities and their families outside this construct and the state budget funding.

Due to projected job growth, DSPs are the number one job on Ohio's Top Jobs List, but they are the lowest compensated and have the highest proportion of vacancies to filled positions. In 2021, the vacancy rates in the DD Home and Community Based System was at 19 percent for full-time and 23 percent for part-time jobs, which equates to approximately 8,500 full and part-time jobs. Since 2018, the annual turnover rate for DSPs has been around 50 percent.

The impact of the workforce crisis on people with developmental disabilities and their families is not overstated. Increased turnover and vacancies result in fewer supports being provided. Agencies that employ DSPs served almost 2,000 less people in 2022 than in 2019. In contrast, the average number of people served by these agencies increased approximately **1,000 per year** between 2014 and 2018. This issue will be compounded by projected growth in need of services. We know that when the workforce is not there, families must carry the burden, that people must utilize higher cost and more restrictive settings, or that people will go without services.



DODD reimbursement rates are established through state budget appropriations, administrative rules, or the Ohio Revised Code. County boards, nor providers, can set their own rates or supplement the Medicaid rate. **This is a critical point of the system – providers are capped at paying low wages because they can only pull from the rates that are funded in the budget.** From that rate, providers must determine starting wages, longevity, overtime, and other considerations in the compensation of DSPs. **There is no private pay, no alternative service option, and no way to charge higher rates.** Providers and their DSPs can only earn what the rates pay through the appropriation we establish in the budget.

Due to low reimbursement rates, we know from our compensation survey¹, that DSPs, on average, start at \$12.10 an hour, with an average overall hourly wage of \$13.72. It is estimated that 18% of the Ohio direct care workforce falls below the federal poverty line. In Ohio, 44% of direct care

¹ https://dodd.ohio.gov/about-us/dodd_data/dsp+compensation+survey

workers are receiving public assistance, with 25% receiving food and nutrition assistance and 32% on Medicaid.

Without budget action, providers cannot account for increased costs, compete for new workers in a growing wage market, or increase the wages for their tenured staff. Without budget action, people with developmental disabilities and their families will struggle to find and keep essential employees.

To recognize and value the work of DSPs is to recognize and value the people they support.

You and Governor DeWine have recognized this need. After years of little to no increases for rates, Governor DeWine's first budget made the largest investment in the history of our system and the rates that support wages. Prior to the DeWine administration, the HCBS homemaker-personal care rate was at \$11.12. That first budget raised that rate to \$13.23. With that increase, DODD also implemented the DSP Compensation Survey to track funds being passed to providers and to collect workforce data.

Proposal

DODD worked with other cabinet agencies to raise the rates of related services experiencing the worst workforce crisis. Increased rates will result in a \$16 per hour average reimbursement for the rates that pay DSP wages. DODD will also increase rates for services including adult day services, transportation, technology through Remote Support, and Shared Living, a program that pays for a person with a developmental disability to live with a family member or a caregiver. We will continue to meet with our partners to determine the best way to develop new policies for these important services. For the first time, DODD will be able to increase waiver add-ons which provide an additional rate for those with behavioral, medical, and complex care needs. Each of these increases is the largest increase for that service in budget history.

The budget maintains the statutory ICF reimbursement formula. Similar to rates for HCBS DSPs, this budget makes additional investments in DSPs working at ICFs. This budget also increases the add-on rate for ICFs that serve Ohioans who are dependent on ventilator care by 200%. This will allow more people with ventilators to receive care in an ICF instead of in higher cost and more restrictive hospital settings.

DODD will also use funds to help providers and DSPs in additional ways. By creating a DSP Portal to store training records and credentials, DSPs and their employers can have access to their trainings to reduce duplication and streamline the onboarding process to allow them to start providing services sooner. Additionally, a statewide DSP Support Network would be established to provide resources and connections for DSPs to access on-demand to offer additional help when necessary. Finally, we would establish and expand support to meet the needs of DSPs outside of their job duties, such as childcare, transportation, and accessing benefits. These initiatives could help reduce turnover and increase retention of DSPs in Ohio, ultimately improving support for people with disabilities.

Increasing Advocacy and Accessibility

Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families should have every opportunity to be a part of their community. People with disabilities across Ohio have led this effort and advocated for communities to be accepting and inclusive.

Budget language will ensure that at least one person eligible for services is appointed to each county board of developmental disabilities. This change will give people with disabilities a more prominent voice in matters concerning the services they rely on. Many counties in Ohio have already chosen to appoint people eligible for services to their boards. They have seen good results because of the lived experiences and ideas they bring to the discussions and decisions of the board. DODD will support people living with developmental disabilities, county boards, and local appointing

authorities in this effort. The budget will also do the following to advance inclusion and similar initiatives:

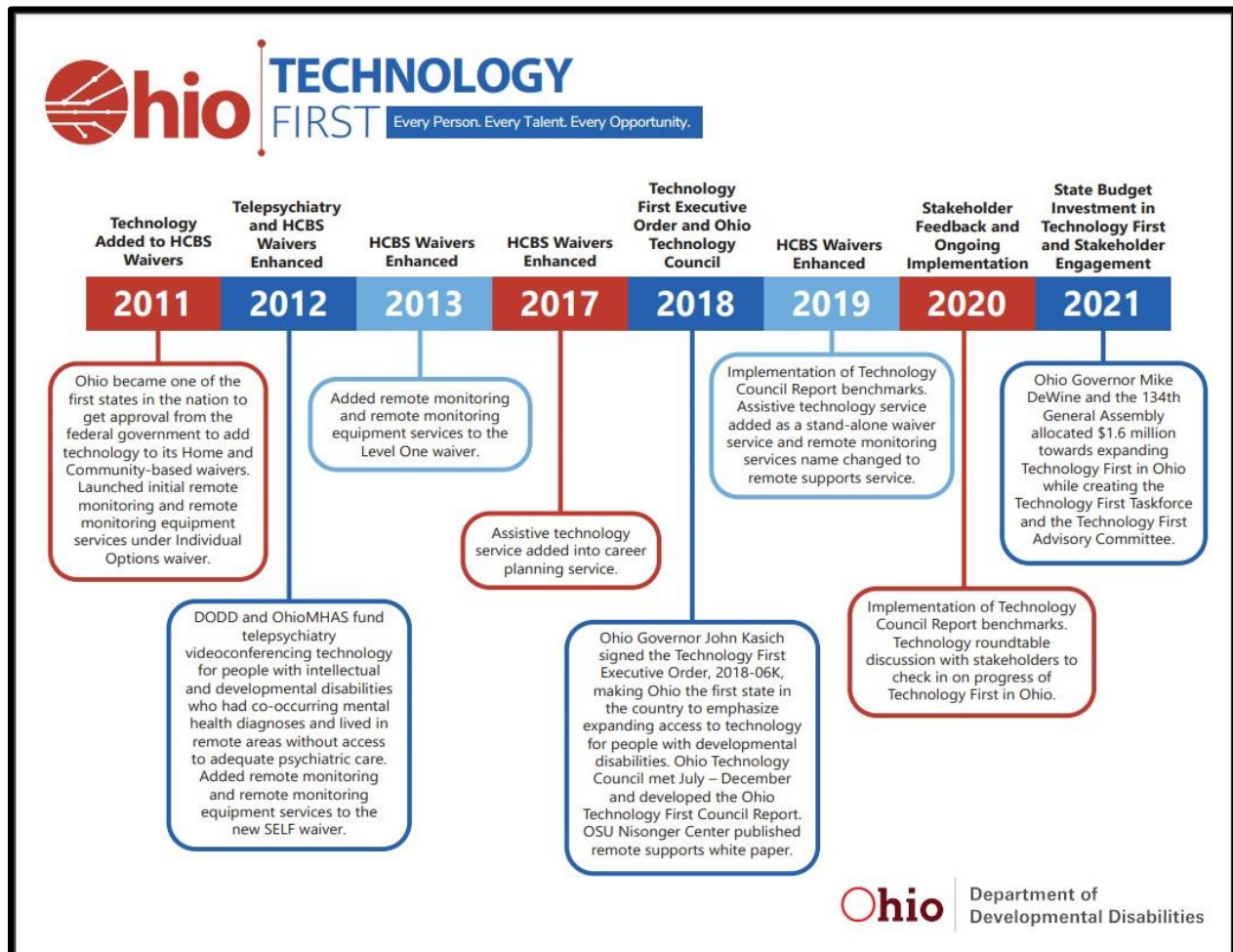
- DODD will collaborate with state and local partners to increase the availability of universal changing tables in public places and businesses. This will increase the number of public places where people will have a safe, clean place to attend to their personal needs.
- DODD will continue to partner with the Ohio Department of Education and the Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio for the Learning Aid Ohio initiative. This initiative provides supplemental learning opportunities for thousands of students with disabilities across Ohio to stay on track toward their academic goals.
- DODD will support Advocacy and Protective Services Inc (APSI) to lower caseloads and ensure there is no waiting list for guardianship services. This ensures timely decisions and planning for people who may need guardianship services to receive the assistance they need to access and be included in their communities.

Investing in Technology Support

As we have discussed, the foundation of our service delivery system is the in-person provision of services to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities. That has typically meant a family member or a paid professional to provide in-person assistance. We also know and are seeing in growing numbers, that technology can meet many needs and is a preferred choice for many people with developmental disabilities.

Technology can allow for greater independence and quality of life for Ohioans with developmental disabilities. DODD has embraced technology services and has put significant effort into education, promotion, and facilitating the use of technology.

DODD's technology-based services include Assistive Technology and Remote Support. These services are available in all three HCBS waivers. Something is considered Assistive Technology if it helps provide personalized assistance for daily tasks, such as a cellphone application that reminds someone to stay on task at their job, or appliances with automatic shut-off features.



Remote Support uses two-way communication in real-time, just like Skype or FaceTime, so a person can communicate with their providers when they need them. This allows for a person to be more independent in their home without a provider being on site.

Devices that engage in two-way communication or provide step-by-step assistance can help people overcome barriers and help them live the lives

they want. For example, many new technologies can help someone feel more secure in their home, provide instruction on how to prepare an evening meal, or help to access public transportation. With these advancements, more Ohioans with developmental disabilities will have the opportunity to experience a life more fully integrated into their community.

DODD has initiated many projects to increase the availability and acceptance of technology options, including:

- Issued grants to providers to become technology providers, expand services, connect transportation, and improve provider business options;
- Made telepsychiatry and telehealth services available;
- Hired people living with developmental disabilities and family members as tech ambassadors; and
- Provided internet assistance to people utilizing technology support.

Proposal

This budget continues initiatives the General Assembly supported in the previous budget that has furthered Ohio's work as a national leader in technology efforts. Through this budget, DODD will establish regional technology support, which will create close-to-home opportunities for people to experience and try technology that may benefit them. Regional assistance will also provide technical assistance for the county boards and providers who want to offer the service or learn more about how it can increase the independence of the people they support.

The budget increases rates for Remote Support services and provides additional funds to help providers develop their own technology services. This will allow providers to better assist people with disabilities and extend the impact of their DSPs. These investments are key to our strategic movement to give more people across Ohio the opportunity to be supported by technology in the way it works best for them.

Investing in Youth with Complex Needs

Governor DeWine's administration has worked collaboratively to support youth with complex needs and their families. Families have brought stories and needs to us and to you. Together, we developed a previous budget that established dedicated funding for DODD's multi-system youth initiatives.

This budget will allow DODD to bolster partnerships and build capacity and expertise to support youth with complex needs in their family homes, through short-term stabilization as well as long-term residential settings. DODD will increase the capacity of the Multi-Disciplinary Comprehensive Assessment Team and coaching for families, while also making it an option for younger youth. DODD will continue the Keeping Families Together initiative, which funds county efforts to assist multi-system youth and their families. All these initiatives promote families staying together and prevent custody relinquishment.

Through Governor DeWine's first budget, DODD was able to establish an add-on rate for approved ICF providers to provide short-term residential assistance. Because of the growing need for long-term residential options, the budget will increase options for ICFs willing to provide intensive services for youth with complex behavioral health needs and a disability. Budget language creates a new peer group for ICFs who are supporting youth with complex needs through this structure. This new peer group will allow DODD to work with ICF providers to develop a reimbursement that covers costs and supports the youth in these settings need.

System Reform

The foundation of our HCBS waiver system is nearly twenty years old. Through investment and policy improvement as well as the changing needs, wants, and expectations of people with developmental disabilities, the processes, and systems we have in place have become overly complex for all involved. Although these changes were well intended to better assist the system, duplication of efforts, additional requirements, incremental

changes to numerous systems and applications, and a host of other modifications have resulted in this complexity.

Stakeholders have collectively identified many of the issues and frustrations that exist with the current structure, and we used that input to outline the opportunities and benefits of redesigning the system to improve Ohio's support for people with developmental disabilities. Now is the time to ensure that the robust support system Ohio has built for people with developmental disabilities is in alignment with the needs and preferences of the people who are receiving those services.

Following an RFP, we contracted with Deloitte to assist with this project. Over the next two years, DODD will work with Deloitte and all our partners to make our waiver system more streamlined and better for people. We will look at the process, structure, and tools used from assessment, individual budgets, services, and billing and reimbursement. All of this will be done with the primary goal to create a system of services that supports people with developmental disabilities and their families to achieve their vision of a good life.

Conclusion

Chairwoman Carruthers and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide an overview of Governor DeWine's budget proposals for the Department of Developmental Disabilities. I look forward to continuing to meet with you and working together on a budget that supports Ohioans with developmental disabilities, their families, and those who serve them. I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly K. Hauck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'K'.

Kim Hauck
Director