

Janemarie Sowers
House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
Interested Party Testimony, HB 33
March 16, 2023

Chair Carruthers, Ranking member Liston, Members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to provide Interested Party testimony on HB 33.

My name is Janemarie Sowers and this is my daughter, Kendra. As you can see she is on a ventilator and has significant disabilities that limit all aspects of her life. She is dependent on others for all aspects of daily living. Kendra lives at home with me. Living at home, in the community, surrounded by her family and friends is what she deserves as a human being. It is the least restrictive environment and the most cost effective as it is 1/6 the cost of institutionalization.

Kendra is on the Ohio Home Care Waiver Program (OHCW) which is supposed to provide her with medically necessary services and supports which include 112 hrs of skilled nursing care per week and \$10,000 a year for home modifications. The Ohio Home Care Waiver Program looks amazing on paper. In reality, it sucks and good luck getting services and supports.

Currently Kendra receives 42.75 hours a week of skilled nursing care by a paid provider. The rest falls on me. Medicaid does not pay me to care for my daughter even though Appendix K (<https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/downloads/oh-0446-0337-1035-0198-combined-appendix-k-appvl.pdf>) which was implemented during the Public Health Emergency, allows for me to be her paid provider. We have a Nursing Crisis! Today, there is a fraction of the nurses enrolled as Medicaid Independent Providers as there were in 2007 when my daughter was placed on OHCW Program. One of the main problems for the shortage of nurses in Medicaid programs is the ridiculously low reimbursement rate for Private Duty Nursing (PDN). The chart shows Ohio Medicaid's current Private Duty Nursing reimbursement rate, surrounding state's reimbursement rates, and the rate we are requesting Ohio increase the PDN reimbursement rate too. This increase will allow for retention of current nurses, the recruitment of additional nurses, and the recruitment of ICU level care nurses that my daughter and others like her require.

Medicaid Private Duty Nursing Rate Per Hour Comparison Chart

Provider type	IP RN	Agency RN	IP LPN	Agency LPN
Ohio Current	\$29.84	\$37.00	\$24.96	\$31.28
Ohio Requested	\$46.00	\$52.00	\$38.52	\$46.00
Michigan	\$52.57	\$57.84	\$44.84	\$49.16
Pennsylvania	X	\$50.00	X	\$45.00
Indiana	X	\$48.97	X	\$34.78
West Virginia	*	\$47.68	*	\$47.68
North Carolina	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$45.00
Kentucky	\$36.00	\$36.00	\$36.00	\$36.00

Table Notes: X – Indicates Independent Provider PDN rate not available

* - Indicates does not allow Independent Providers for PDN

As you can see Ohio reimburses substantially less than surrounding states except for Kentucky Agency RN. Not Only does the nursing rate need increased but the Home Modification allotment needs increased also. Currently the dollar amount for Home Modifications is \$10,000 per year per client. This has been the same amount since 1996 or 1997. The cost of home modification items such as ceiling lifts, generators, bathroom modifications, and ramps has increased substantially while the home modification allotment has remained the same. This causes these projects to be spread out over a two-year period delaying access and jeopardizing the safety and welfare of the individual.

I am asking you to show the disabled community that you care about them. You can do that by investing in Nurses, Direct Support Workers, service and support providers, and services and supports for Medicaid Waiver Programs.

- Increase the Private Duty Nursing Reimbursement Rate to the Requested Rates.
- Increase Home Modification amount to \$15,000 per year per client.
- Require Medicaid include clients, parents, and providers in their workgroups.

We live this life every day. We know what we need and what works and doesn't work.

- There needs to be accountability and oversight with Medicaid. Currently, there is none. Medicaid and their contractors do what they want when they want without regard to the rules and regulations. Establish an accountability and oversight committee for Medicaid.

Thank you for your time and attention,


Janemarie Sowers