

Alicia Hopkins  
Interested Party Testimony for HB 33  
May 25<sup>th</sup> 2023 Senate Finance Hearing

Honorable Senate Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Jerry Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes and Members of Senate Finance Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 33.

My name is Alicia Hopkins. I have developmental disability and several rare diseases. I am involved in any advocacy groups across Ohio. I am here to talk about direct support and nursing wages. I testified on several committees sharing my own personal story and even reciting the names of my peers across Ohio who struggle to access care.

In 2019 I had warned Senator Sykes of the looming care crisis in home care. I was told to be more organized and then approach it all again. I remember sitting in an advocacy meeting with state directors at the end of 2020 and again we begged for support for the crisis. I watched the last four years go by and this care crisis worsen. I experienced my own horror story in 2021-2022 where I was forced to be on a backup plan for 289 days. I painted to survive. I painted 25 feet of art over the last two years to tell the stories of people with disabilities, caregivers, and families across Ohio who need home care access.





The Art above is real stories from real Ohioans. Every quote in each piece is someone's lived experience that is asking Legislators to do the right thing- **FUND HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES AND SUPPORT WORKERS WAGES ON ALL SYSTEMS OF HOME CARE.**

Home Care Access is a human right!

We have let the most vulnerable to suffer in silence for four years now... even as we are struggling to stay a float many of us are actively engaged at the table speaking up... It's time to fund home and community based services and supports for all avenues of home care paid by Ohio Department of Medicaid, Aging and Developmental Disabilities. It is no longer that we should be more organized the lists of people who need access to care can go on for miles. Below I have a list of several names. If every agency working with people with disabilities and older adults pulled together lists like I have you truly understand how bad it is. It's so bad that people are being abused, neglected and some people have died from lack of care.

Vulnerability has been created by this system that only allows wage increases through the state budget. Every two years we come to legislators begging for wage increases yet Inflation is huge hindrance that leaves people unwilling to take jobs like home care because they simply pay the lowest of any other industry in our state. There are jobs in home care yet no one wants them because there is no ability to support a family or have stability with poverty wages. Many of our current providers are living pay check to paycheck struggling to make ends meet. They do it for the people and not the money. Systemic challenges like pay delays and contracting issues are what drive out our providers. We need a better structured system the best course of action is an oversight committee to assure that Ohioans get the care authorized and our providers are paid timely and routinely.

The number of Ohioans who need access to home care is very long and I want to name just a few as I been collecting names across social media. Please acknowledge these names some children with disabilities, adults with disabilities and older adults who need these services and supports their Olmsted Right!

Ohioans in Need of Care

Zach from Allen County, Ohio needs 18 hours of DSP care a week.

Jonathan from Allen County, Ohio needs 24 hours of care a week.

Allison from Ashland County, Ohio needs 80 hours of Nursing a week.

Stephanie from Belmont County, Ohio needs 40 hours a week of care under her medicaid waiver.

Utawna from Butler County, Ohio needs 56 hours of nursing care a week.

Megan from Butler County, Ohio needs 84 Hours of nursing a week.

Faith from Butler County, Ohio needs 72 hours of nursing a week.

Brooklyn from Clark County, Ohio needs 140 Hours of care a week.

Mia from Clermont County, Ohio needs 40 Hours of Personal Care Aide Care a week.

Danielle from Coshocton County, Ohio needs 85 hours of nursing a week.

Brian from Crawford county needs 12 hours a week of HPC Care.

Noah from Cuyahoga County, Ohio needs 112 hours of Nursing a week.

Lindsey from Cuyahoga County, Ohio needs 63 Hours of Nursing a Week.

Declan from Cuyahoga County, Ohio needs 50 hours of Nursing a week.

Zia from Cuyahoga County, Ohio needs 30 hours a week on her I/o waiver.

Christel from Cuyahoga County, Ohio needs 20 hours a week of home care.

Isabella from Cuyahoga County, Ohio needs 56 hours of care a week.

Judy from Cuyahoga County, Ohio needs 80 of Nursing Care a Week.

Jenni from Cuyahoga County, Ohio needs 72 hours of care a week.

Kristi from Delaware County, Ohio needs 24 hours of care.

Wynter from Delaware County, Ohio needs 40 hours of care a week.

Julie from Delaware County, Ohio needs 40 hours of care a week.

Curt from Delaware County, Ohio needs 100 hours of care.

Sarah from Franklin County, Ohio Needs 40 hours of Nursing Care a week.

Kevin from Franklin County, Ohio needs 120 hours of care.

Terry from Franklin County, Ohio needs 40 hours of PCA and 40 Hours of Nursing Care a week.

Yvonne from Franklin County, Ohio needs 16 hours of aide care a week.

Michael from Franklin County, Ohio needs 20 hours of care a week.

Corey from Greene County, Ohio needs 30 hours of Nursing a week.  
Meaghan from Greene County, Ohio needs 20 hours of DSP Care.  
Scott from Greene County, Ohio needs 108 hours of HPC Care.

Glenda from Hamilton County, Ohio needs 50 hours a nursing care a week.  
Robert from Hamilton County, Ohio needs 62 hours of a care a week.  
Alyssa from Hamilton County, Ohio needs 50 hours of nursing care a week.  
Kellee from Hamilton County, Ohio needs 28 hours of care a week.

Martha from Hancock County, Ohio needs 25 hours of PCA care on her Medicaid Waiver.

Kaitlyn from Huron County, Ohio needs 24 hours of nursing a week.  
Hailey from Huron County, Ohio needs 30 hours of care a week.

Rick from Lake County, Ohio Needs 112 hours of nursing a week.

Jack from Licking County, Ohio needs 112 hours of nursing care a week.

Aryia from Lorain County, Ohio needs 80 hours of Nursing a week.  
Cara from Lorain County, Ohio needs 80 hours of Nursing a week.  
Alessandra from Lorain County, Ohio needs 40 hours of HPC a week.

Margarita from Lucas County, Ohio needs 20 hours a week of care.

Christia from Medina County, Ohio needs 25 hours of DSP Care a week.  
Domenic from Medina County, Ohio needs 56 hours of Nursing a week.

Stephanie from Miami County, Ohio

Kendra a 17 year old from Montgomery County Needs 112 hours of nursing a week.

Tyler from Muskingum County, Ohio needs 40 hours of nursing care a week.

Jerry from Perry County, Ohio needs 40 hours a week of Nursing care a week.  
Diane from Perry County, Ohio needs 40 hours of nursing a week.  
Ronda from Perry County needs 40 hrs of nursing a week.  
Kyle from Pickaway County, Ohio needs 56 hours of nursing care a week.  
Emily from Pickaway County, Ohio needs 40 hours of care a week.  
Jaime from Pickaway County, Ohio needs 25 hours of care a week.

Babette from Portage County, Ohio needs 126 hours of nursing care a week.  
Brandon from Portage County, Ohio needs 60 hours of nursing care a week.

Heidi from Putman County, Ohio needs 24 hours of care.

Kelley from Preble County, Ohio needs 42 hours of Nursing a week.

Edward from Richland County, Ohio needs 78 hours of care a week.

Will from Ross County, Ohio needs 24 hours of DSP Care and 14 hours of Nursing Care a week.

Tracy from Ross County, Ohio needs 16 hours a day of Nursing for four waiver consumers.

Jill from Ross County, Ohio needs 20 hours of aide care a week through their ODM Waiver.

Matty from Ross County, Ohio needs 40 hours of care a week.

Lauren from Sandusky County, Ohio needs 20 hours a week of DSP care.

Diane from Stark County needs 20 hours a week of care.

Devan from Stark County needs 58 hours of care a week.

Diane from Summit County, Ohio needs 14 hours of DSP Care a week.

John from Summit County, Ohio needs 40 hours of nursing care a week.

Karen from Summit County, Ohio needs 8 hours of a day of HPC care a week.

Kim's son Luke from Summit County, Ohio needs needs 36 hours of nursing care.

Kerry from Tuscarwarus County, Ohio needs 4 hours of nursing and 56 hours of aide care a week under her Medicaid waiver.

Elliot from Trumbull County, Ohio needs 24/7 Care.

Liam from Warren County, Ohio needs 56 hours of Nursing a week.

Matty from Warren County, Ohio needs 40 hours a week of nursing.

Grace From Warren County, Ohio needs 45 hours of PDN Nursing.

Natasha from Warren County, Ohio needs 24 hours a week of care.

Rachel from Warren County, Ohio needs 112 hours of nursing care a week.

Jaime needs 112 hours of nursing a week

Triston needs 70 hours of nursing a week.

Rachel needs 60 hours of nursing a week.

Ezra needs 24 hours a day 7 days a week of nursing care.

Devan needs 112 hours of nursing care.

Natalie needs 56 hours of nursing care.

Pricilla needs 96 hours of nursing.

Jessica needs 42 hours of Aide Care a week under her Medicaid waiver.

Lori has 13 hours of care available.

Wyatt needs respite care.

Julia needs Respite Care

Kim needs 40 hours of home care a week.  
Sarah needs 112 hours of nursing care a week.  
Amanda needs 86 hours of nursing care.  
Jenny needs 56 hours of care a week.  
Hannah needs 56 hours of care a week.  
Hailey needs 56 hours of care a week.  
Andriy...40/week. HPC  
Jacob. ....52/week HPC. 64 Nursing  
Evie 20/week HPC  
Laura 32week HPC  
Chrissy. 20/week HPC  
Joey 15/week HPC  
Faith needs 12 hours a day of nursing care.  
Marty. 70/week HPC  
Dido. 35/week HPC

This list goes far beyond this but I advocate and give people a voice this list is giving a voice to people are living in crisis every day while a Legislative Body decides the fate of whether they can recruit workers to take a shower, have hygiene, use the toilet, eat a hot meal. Many people have put themselves in vulnerable positions to never enter an institution. Yet we cannot see that people want to be at home where they can live thrive and be active in their communities. The most affordable asset our state can provide has been a four year long fight for basic human needs.

Dear Ohio Legislators

What gives you the right to take away my basic human needs or the human needs of any disabled or elderly person that allows dignity as a human being?

FOR THE RECORD THIS CRISIS IS A RESULT OF NEGLIGENCE BY THE STATE OF OHIO AND EVERY LEGISLATOR WHO HAS IGNORED THE CRISIS

Please stop to think what it might be like to have to call 911 to get out of bed or go to the hospital for Gtube feed or even maybe be forced to look on Craigslist for caregivers exposing yourself to people you never met hoping that a stranger will help you do basics to stay stable

The state of Ohio has a duty to protect the most vulnerable. We are not disposable WE are human beings We are Ohioans too!

The Medicaid Budget must be increased enough to support these wages. I heard one state rep say the auditing department wants raises we have to give them. Why would you give raises to people who make more than those caring for most vulnerable? Those folks don't gotta worry about a hot shower or hot meal or sitting in soiled clothes. They have their needs met. CHECK YOUR PRIORITIES!

I ask that you respectfully do the right thing for every Ohioan living this shade of hell caused by an irresponsible legislative body.

- I ask you increase wages on all systems of Home Care including increases for Medicaid home care nurses.

- Provide an oversight committee/council that includes people with disabilities at the table to hold state agencies accountable and managed care plans accountable.
- I also ask you extend Appendix K provisions for parents and spouses to be providers long term amid care crisis.
- I also ask you connect with me or other advocates to learn about ways we can form partnerships with county job centers utilizing them as what they were meant to be one stop shops for finding jobs. Make a plan to Hold events all over the state to help recruit and hire home care workers find money for grants from workforce investment act or other monies to pay for background checks, first aid/CPR training, application assistance to help us bring in more independent providers to fill in gaps.

Thank you for your time any questions please contact me by email [audacity2speak@aol.com](mailto:audacity2speak@aol.com)