

Alicia Hopkins
Interested Party Testimony HB 33
May 8th 2023

Senator Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunities to testify on HB 33..

My name is Alicia Hopkins. I have a developmental disability and several rare diseases. My testimony in recent hearings has been primarily focused on the Ohio Direct Support Crisis. This testimony has some additional information that I like to share and speak up on.

Direct Support Care Crisis

I am asking you to please increase Medicaid budget enough to respectfully pay our Medicaid home care nurses a wage of \$56 for RN and \$46 for LPN for independent and agencies. We have children and adults with disabilities who have complex needs who are on waivers through every system of care Ohio Department of Medicaid, Ohio Department of Aging and Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities that receive Medicaid funded nursing. Without an increase in Medicaid budget for this line item the legislative body is neglecting whole population of people perhaps Ohios most vulnerable. These are people living in our community with ventilator, tracheotomy care needs, port care and much more. They have an Olmstead Right to live In the community. As our state is in a CODE RED for Nursing care in hospitals Senators, please for the sake of Ohioans on Medicaid who need nursing do the right thing WE are in a CODE RED barely hanging on as a disability community.

We ask you also raise wages for Direct Support Workers on all systems of care Ohio Department of Medicaid, Ohio Department of Aging and Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to at least \$20 an hour for independent providers. We ask that these budgets also maintain current agency rates which are above the \$20 an hour.

HHA and PCA Training

I like the idea that allows Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Nurse aides to be able to train and supervise HHA and PCA cases. I am asking you include HCA which is home care attendant is this category because we are at a critical shortage of Nurses. In order to help these families who need providers that can do nursing tasks we need the HCA provider type included in this. We are in a CODE RED when comes to home care and nursing services. To allow supervision in the areas of PCA and HHA only you ignore a whole provider type that can be included to have this supervision under and Licensed Practical Nurse or Nurse Aide Supervision. The current Ohio law only allows for an Registered Nurse to supervise Home Care Attendants provider by expanding it you also would create fairness and allowance for more people to access care that involves nursing tasks to be performed.

Supported Decision Making

I am asking that you respectfully consider the wording of context and consider removing the supported decision making from budget until you have proper stakeholder feedback from people who are effected by it.

Home Health Licensure Exemption

We need to include independent providers self directed under Ohio Medicaid Ohio Home Care Waiver program...

Protection and Advocacy System

I ask respectfully that you don't strip Disability Rights Ohio of their protections and advocacy duties. Disability Rights Ohio advocates for all people with disabilities. They advocate for people with developmental disabilities on the Medicaid waivers and in all systems of care. I have life I have because of their willingness to help me under my rights as a person with a developmental disability.

Medicaid Coverage of Obesity Treatment

I support prohibiting limitations on Obesity Treatment. I have a developmental feeding disorder. I have both Medicare and Medicaid due to limitations of Nutrition Assistance by Medicaid I have either had to pay out of pocket or I only can utilize two visits a year. This has detoured me from being able to improve my overall health. I am not a candidate for bariatric surgery but am in need of ongoing nutrition services. As an adult it has been a huge fight. We need to make sure anyone who needs nutrition supports can access them at any time who have Medicaid. Please make sure there are never limitations on this type of care for Medicaid recipients.