

Partnerships in Community Living Testimony
Chris Schwarz, Employment Director
Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood
Invited Testimony on eXPRS Billing
February 10, 2015, 3:00pm, HRB

Partnerships in Community Living is an organization that provides services to Oregonians with disabilities residing in Polk, Marion, Jackson, and Josephine counties. These services include supports to help people to be successful in their own, or their family home, residential services to provide supports around the clock, and employment services to help people learn job skills and to find and keep jobs in their communities. It is these employment services that have changed the most in the last year. Pursuant to the Governor's order 13-04 community employment services providers like PCL have been tasked with eliminating less integrated employment environments and developing capacity to assist people with disabilities on their journey towards individual integrated employment.

As Oregon transitioned to hourly billing for employment services in September 2014, PCL was well placed and prepared for the change. Our internal data collection and billing systems were aligned to provide the data we needed to submit billing in a timely manner. PCL participated in the ODDS hourly billing pilot program beginning in July 2014. We hired an administrative specialist to focus on data synthesis and billing, designed systems to capture data, trained over 60 Direct Support Professionals to use the system and implemented two weeks ahead of schedule to allow for testing and correction. Before and during the course of the pilot our billing expert indicated to ODDS staff how cumbersome the system was to use and recommended an upload option, several ODDS staff agreed that upload would solve problems and further agreed to review the recommendation. Due to the complexities and idiosyncrasies of the eXPRS payment system we were unable to bill for September 2014 employment services until mid-November 2014, a 6 week delay. PCL's administrative costs increased over 375% in the initial phase and ongoing administrative expenses specifically linked to eXPRS billing are 311% of the same period last year (see table attached). We continue to operate 6-8 weeks behind in billing for Employment services due to the time consuming and difficult nature of input into the eXPRS payment system. Additionally, Support Service Brokerages haven't consistently entered Plan of Care authorizations, resulting in inconsistent billing and in many cases, a return to paper invoices. **Our experts agree that allowing spreadsheet upload and other user interface solutions could help solve the problem in the long term. In the short term, we request that temporary relief be applied in the form of time limited fiscal relief to address increases in administrative costs incurred within providers.**

While we continue to work toward eXPRS system solutions with our partners at DHS, we're told that other IT projects have a higher priority and that this issue can only be addressed if it is prioritized at a higher level. **We understand that other projects may have priority and ask that this be reviewed as soon as possible.**

Thank you for this opportunity, we're happy to answer any questions you may have.

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