



Partnerships in  
Community  
Living, Inc.

April 6, 2015

To: House Committee on Human Services and Housing

From: Joanne Fuhrman, Associate Director, Partnerships in Community Living, Inc.

Re: Support for HB 2756 as amended to create a task force on training for individuals who support people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

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Partnership in Community Living, Inc. (PCL) is a private, non-profit provider organization serving adults and children with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). PCL has been providing residential, employment, supported living, and in home family support to over 200 Oregonians for the past 28 years. We currently employ over 800 team members charged with meeting the PCL Mission, "Expand the horizons and enhance the quality of life for those we support."

Like many providers across Oregon, we are facing a serious crisis in relation to hiring, training, and retaining quality Direct Support Professionals (DSP). DSP's have, in the past, been referred to as "care providers," but they do so much more than that. DSP's are to key to the delivery of quality services for people with I/DD. Our challenge, as providers, is to not only hire the right people, but to make sure they have the comprehensive and quality training they need to provide excellent supports. While training is a required part of the Oregon Administrative Rule, it is currently up to each provider to develop their own training system based on an established set of Core Competencies. Due to a lack of any statewide, comprehensive approach, PCL has created and established its own training program. Over the years, our investment in training has paid off. While our recruitment and filling vacant positions continue to be an issue, our investment in training has paid off and has dramatically improved our turnover rate. Currently, PCL's turnover remains around 25 percent compared to a State average that is estimated at over 80 percent.

This last year, we have taken our efforts one step further and implemented the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) credentialing pilot project with 25 DSPs. This process will utilize the College of Direct Supports and the NADSP Credentialing standards and a Cohort model. While we are only a few months in to the project, we are already seeing great results. This model demonstrates when the system invests in the workforce; they will rise to the occasion. We have seen increased engagement and commitment to mission related outcomes. The bottom line is that everyone benefits for this investment. It provides a stable workforce for providers, a career path for DSP's, and, most importantly, long term committed supports for people receiving service.

We believe that the use of a competency based-training program across the entire I/DD system will improve the quality of our workforce, the quality of our services, and the quality of life for the people with I/DD. We know from experience that good models are already available to use, such as the College of Direct Supports and the NADSP credentialing/competency curriculum.

Oregon does not need to re-create the wheel, we just need to come together and agree upon the use of these proven strategies.

**We support the idea of a broad based task force be convened to review the work that has already been done and endorsed by the primary funder of these supports (CMS) and see how we can effectively apply it in Oregon. We have already asked for and received a crosswalk of these federal core competencies with the OAR requirements that could be a starting point for productive discussions.**