

From: kath palmer
To: [JWMHS Exhibits](#)
Subject: Regional Developmental Disabilities Program, rural Oregon
Date: Friday, March 24, 2017 10:27:30 AM

Greetings,

My name is Katherine Palmer and I live in Pendleton, Oregon. I encourage you to reinstate the Rural Oregon Regional Developmental Disabilities Program, the program was removed in the Governor's proposed budget. In Eastern Oregon, the regional program includes 14 counties and the situation reminds me of a previous legislative issue a couple of sessions back, the effort to save the Eastern Oregon ESD program (Education Service District). Rural Oregon needs multi-county programs while metropolitan communities can provide the services internally. For example, Multnomah County has almost 150 employees in their County Developmental Disability Program and most counties in Eastern Oregon have less than 20, some have less than five.

My son, is served in an adult foster home. He has communication - situations, that can be challenging for his foster providers and family members at times. For over 12 years, starting before he was with a foster provider, he has received behavior support and consultation services from staff at the Eastern Oregon Regional DD Program. They help his team write a behavior support plan and provided specialized / required training to the staff and family members serving him.

If the Regional Programs are eliminated and these services are no longer available locally, my son's team will have to try to find another consultant, most likely from the other side of the state, and at much greater cost. It will also mean the team will have to start over with a new consultant who doesn't know my son and the history of his non-verbal communication. This is assuming we can find the service at all - many specialists on the other side of the state don't want to travel to Rural Oregon, particularly in winter. If we are unable to find a consultant, my son might not be able to stay in this foster home where he feels loved and supported, due to state foster home regulations.

I also know two individuals who utilized the Regional DD Program this last year, when crisis in their home situation occurred. One was in a foster home situation where the home was under undo-stress and this individual acted out non-verbally. The other individual, his retired parents came to the realization that the time had come for out-of-home placement. The second situation became a crisis, due to lack of options in Oregon for out-of-home placement. Both of these situations were handled compassionately and successfully by the Eastern Oregon Regional DD Program. I fear the personal anguish and the "snowball" crisis cost to the state, if the Regional DD Program is not available to vulnerable individuals in Rural Oregon.

Thank you for your time. If you have further questions, please contact me at 541-276-5047.

Sincerely,

Katherine Palmer