



ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS
For more information contact Cheryl Ramirez at 503-399-7201

March 28, 2017

RE: Testimony received by the Association of Community Mental Health Programs - DD in support of Family Support Services from individuals and families.

From: Dave Meyer
Sent: Friday, March 24, 2017 7:55 AM
To: Debbie Long <LongDA@jacksoncounty.org>
Subject: Budget Cuts

Hi Debbie;

Very sad what is currently going on. My responses are below. Hope you are doing well!

1. How have these funds helped your child or family?

This program has helped Gavin by providing excellent care while my wife and I are at work. His care provider is like family and very helpful in the following areas: speech, potty training, swimming lessons, nutrition, and personal health. We are also provided with incontinence items monthly.

2. What would happen if this program was not available to you?

We would have to pay for these very expensive services if they were no longer provided to us. Best case, an added \$400 a month we would need to pay in care expenses during the school year and about \$1000 per month during the summer months. Worst case, my wife would have to quit her job or reduce her hours to care for Gavin. But more importantly than money, Gavin needs an outside care-giver to teach him. He can be stubborn and unwilling to learn with his parents. Please keep this program active, it helps MANY parents with disabled children get the care they need!

Thank you;
Dave and Anjay Meyer

From: Carol Pruett
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 11:10 PM
To: Brion Peterson
Subject: Re: Budget cuts

1. How have these funds helped your child or family?

The funds allotted for the Family support program are critical to help with individuals and families with a disabled family member and to assist with that individuals progress given thier scope of disability. These funds help facilitate individual progress at thier level meeting the family and individual where they are at in skill level and financial capability. Given

that we live in a socioeconomical strapped location the monetary assistance is important to the progress a ID/DD individual and family achieves. Without this funding I personally know my child would be worse off as her basic needs would be harder to meet.

2. What would happen if this program was not available to you?

If this funding was unavailable to me there would be a financial gap that I would have to attempt to fill and given the limited time in a day in hours to work and the burden of debt obtained just in monthly living expenses: the additional expense would be hard to impossible to meet.

This situation would be difficult as to helping my daughter as she has higher assistance and basic needs to be met and I would anticipate a possible regression in behavior due to the financial burden of care to be unmet be me as a parent as hard as I may try.

Sincerely,

Carol Pruett

From: J J

Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 4:47 PM

To: Brion Peterson

Subject: Re: FW: Budget cuts

1. They have help my son and our family get safety and assistive items we otherwise wouldn't have been able to afford.
2. If this was not available for us, there will be things needed in the future which will be needed by my son and our family to help him with his disability and help keep him safe. Which would most likely interfere with his development of life skills and obtaining independence.

-The Johnson Family

From:

Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 3:44 PM

To: Brion Peterson

Subject: Re: Budget cuts

To Whom It May Concern,

My son and our family greatly benefited from the Family Support plan provided through Developmental Disability Services. With help and support from this plan and our caseworker, we were able to receive alarms for our doors in our house. My son is four years old and is on the Autism Spectrum and is a runner. He had gotten out of our house previously to the point we thought we didn't know if we could find him. So the help we were provided with through the Family Support plan was able to protect my son and provide peace of mind that he is safe in our home with this added support. If you strip funding from this program my family, and countless others, will be left in a position of desperation and fear. Please do not take away funding from families who so desperately need it to live a normal life.

Sincerely,

Jessica Knuepel

From: Krystal Matthews
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 4:01 PM
To: Katie LaRive
Subject: Re: FW: Budget cuts corrected date

1. How have these funds helped your child or family?

They have helped my son with equipment that his insurance denied to cover

2. What would happen if this program was not available to you?

my son would not be able to have these things that benefit him for every day life activities

From: Nancy Williamson
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2017 1:43 PM
To: Debbie Long <LongDA@jacksoncounty.org>
Subject: letters supporting Family Support program

Nancy and Debbie,

Our daughter has been receiving services for the last two years. Athena, age 3, has received equipment for therapy such as a swing and trampoline. This has helped her appropriately released her energy and satisfy her sensory needs. Athena has also relieved money for community inclusion. We have been able to find her passions in life through this support. She recently did 5 weeks of ice skating lessons which not only taught her balance but helped her with following directions and meeting new people.

The services has benefitted our family greatly and I hope our daughter social and economic position does not deteriorate due to the loss of the program.

Thank you,

Adrienne Baraona

School Teacher

Mother of 2

To whom it may concern,

I have a 5 year old autistic son who receives help through the Family Support Program. They have helped tremendously by steering me in the right direction for his extra needs. Such as occupational therapy, speech therapy, personal support worker and activities in the community.

His case worker is amazing. She doesn't just see my son as another case. She asks about my other children as well and asks how the family is doing on her checkups. She is there when and if I need her help.

I really appreciate all the help I have received from this program as there are not a lot of programs out there that help families who have children with special needs.

Meghan Kendall

To whom it may concern,

Family Support

Family Support is intended to decrease the likelihood of out-of-home placement by providing families of minor children individualized supports such as specialized equipment, consultation, training, and respite. This is a low need and hence low funded service vs the more intensive K Plan services available to eligible children.

The services that are available through Jackson County Health and Human Services Disability program have helped my family so much. The Family Support program along with what has been provided is great and if it were taken away I don't know what I would do at all. My husband and I both work full time, we are not able to receive services like SSI income to help our disabled daughter. She has a long list of issues, including cerebral palsy, neurological issues, cardiac issues and needs support from this program. I know that this program has helped provide my daughter with special equipment that we can not afford otherwise. Some of the items provided have significantly helped her in communication skills and in her mobility. Please I beg you to not take this away. There are plenty of families not just mine who need this kind of help and funding. Having Nancy help us and having been provided with the services has been beyond helpful for my child who can not help herself. Like I mentioned before we are working class doing our best to provide for our family and this is a wonderful service that we cherish having available. If this was gone we would most likely be in more debt than we are now or lose the ability to pay for our home or other necessary items and life events. Having a child is amazing and a lifelong journey full of expenses on any level, having one with disabilities can add to those expenses. Please don't take away from those who are in need and those who really value this program.

Thank you.

-Kayleigh Bitz

The respite care program has helped my disabled child begin to blossom as young adult. She is learning how to possibly live on her own some day and live her dreams. Also, the respite program helps because having a disabled child sometimes takes away from our other children who are not disabled. We get to spend some much needed time with them with the help receive.

Without Respite care my step-daughter would not get the additional care that I can not provide all the time. We could not function with out the respite care.

Please save the program!

Ashley Cabler

From: Naomi Pope
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2017 11:42 PM
To: Nancy Williamson <WilliaNA@jacksoncounty.org>
Subject: How DDS has helped

To whom it may concern,

It has taken me time to find the words to express my worry about losing a program that has helped us so much. Well first I would like to say how grateful we are for the K plan and DDS. Before finding out that our son Landon would qualify for help I was lost, stressed, and had trouble figuring out a plan for his future.

Let me fill you in a bit, Landon is twelve now and in 6th grade, this year is his first full year in school. Yes 6 years in school but never complete until this year. He has ASD and due to the fact that he is high functioning he had trouble fitting into the special classes that were offered in our school system. He spent most of his years suspended and forbidden to go to school. He missed out on learning, socialization and was unable to do many things that encouraged development.

When we were assigned Debbie it was like a curtain was lifted and we finally had someone who could help us through this trying time. We were worried when Debbie moved on but Nancy has been a godsend and we hope she is allowed to continue to make a difference in our lives. Through this program we learned how to work with Landon to help him become successful. I received training that helped me learn proper ways to de-escalate trying situations and proper holds to protect Landon and ourselves from harm. We have received days for respite and hours for a Personal service workers who has helped him by giving us the much needed support in and outside the home. This is huge because I was faced with the possibility of having to stay at home with Landon and losing my income in turn putting more strain on the family.

The need for this program for struggling families is huge! If you want to see a reason for keeping this plan funded come meet our son Landon. Please don't take funding from the one place that is making a difference in the lives of developmentally disabled children and their families. The Pope Family

FROM a Service Coordinator in Multnomah County:

I have a 16 year old male client who looks forward to attending Camp Odakoda every summer. It gives him an opportunity to connect with other kids on the spectrum while gaining skills and cultivating interests. It also gives him amazing childhood memories. At Camp Odakoda, he gets to stay in a yurt with other high school youth. They can go swimming in the pool, play in the creek, and canoe or fish in the pond.

His parents are public school educators; they cannot afford to pay out of pocket for the camp. In order to access funds for camp in the summer, they would have to go through PMDDT process for waived case management/kplan -- a service they do not want or need.

In short, if family support funding is lost, client will no longer be able to attend the ONE community inclusion activity that he looks forward to each year; and his parents will not have access to the ONE time they need respite services.

These are K-plans (or about K-plan services)

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing the email to tell my story and our desperate need to have the Family support Plan for my son.

My son is 5 years old and was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum disorder, Bipolar Type 1, Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Sensory Processing Disorder when he was 3. He struggles every day with not only his Autism but drastic mood swings that can take him from a happy little boy to such a depression that he says that no one loves or likes him and that he does not know why he is this way. He becomes inconsolable crying and will not leave the house to play. Then he can have mood swing the other way to where he never stops moving and has such anger that he can be physically aggressive. These mood swings happen out of nowhere and he rapid cycles meaning he can have multiple mood swings a day.

In addition to that struggle his ASD makes it even more difficult for him because he does not understand the world he lives in. He can not communicate his need for help and becomes frustrated when he can't. He has a difficult time with appropriate interactions with peers as well as adults and so he often comes across as rude or intentionally mean. He is

very literal so pretend play is not something he can do so other children do not want to play with him. He does not like to be touched unless asked or is on his terms which makes it hard to help him during a meltdown. He also processes things very slowly so when pushed for immediate responses to questions or direction he will become agitated causing him to hide, run, lash out or be destructive. He has to have structure and predictability in his life making transitions or change very difficult for him. He also has auditory, tactile, and olfactory sensory processing difficulties which trigger agitation or meltdowns.

The therapy and treatment for these issues are vital for him to gain the tools to survive in this world. The financial burden is overwhelming due to restrictions of insurances plans that do not cover mental health issues or if they do it is such a small amount that we still have to pay a large amount of his treatment ourselves. We as his parents have moved to smaller house to have a lower house payment to have more money available for this as well as working extra shifts and having two jobs to get these bills paid. We still struggle so our miracle came with the approval of the K Plan. We have been able to have behavior therapy which will help us to build an environment for him at home that gives him the structure he needs. This treatment will also help us to see triggers in other places so we can know how to help him to move through them without being agitated or melting down. It will help us to instruct others who are with him or work with him on how to communicate with him as well as how to help him communicate with them. He will learn to understand his emotions as well as how to read others so he can have appropriate interactions. He will learn how to fit in and have friends to play with. When he is getting agitated and needs a break he will learn to let others know so he can have the time to get himself regulated and ready to participate again. With this program he will be able to learn tools that will allow him to grow and become a successful and contributing part of society.

The other crucial part of this program is that we will be able to have help with the insurance assistance that is offered by the state making it easier to pay for his treatment and therapy. We can also have more availability to resources that we either could not afford or that were simply too difficult to get into or could not find. We live in the Rogue Valley where there is such a limited amount of help for these kids as well as the adults with disabilities. This program gives us the help we need to find and get connected with the behavioral therapy, occupational therapy as well as trainings and learning opportunities for parents.

The most important thing for Oregon's budget committee to know when considering cutting these programs and services to families with special needs children or adults is that they will not be able to get the tools they need to be able to be a contributing part of society. This affects Oregon's income because they will not learn how to have jobs which takes away from income taxes, which then makes it impossible to buy houses which decreases property taxes to Oregon. These people and children have the potential to be and have those things and contribute to Oregon's financial budget but they need this help so they can grow and learn how to live in this same world. Please consider the affects that the cut of services will not only effect Oregon families with disable love ones but also the future of Oregon and the contribution these people can give to the state. In the end these kids or adults can pay the state back for the services provided to them now when they grow with the help they need to become successful and to reach their full potential. My son is 5 and even with his problems he is smart and wants to do well. He works hard to figure the world out and is amazing when it comes to numbers so maybe an accountant or financial advisor is in his future. Some of the most successful people are on the spectrum and the reason is because they set their sights on something and don't give up until they reach it. Please give them a chance and don't cut his program. It is what is desperately needed to support them and give them the chance to be great.

I as a parent am so grateful to this state for this program and understand the burden that comes with it. I plead that you consider other options for budget cuts and please do not take this Family Support Program away. We as Oregonian's so desperately need this for our children and family members.

Thank you for your time reading this email as well as your consideration for keeping this program.

Sincerely,

LeeAnn Gasparri, Medford Oregon

Subject: FW: FW: Budget cuts!!!!!!

From: Stephanie Bertrand

Sent: Monday, March 27, 2017 12:11 PM

To: Nancy Williamson <WilliaNA@jacksoncounty.org>; Debbie Long <LongDA@jacksoncounty.org>

Subject: Re: FW: Budget cuts!!!!!!

To Whom it May Concern:

The Family Support Program has been of invaluable service to our family. In just over a year of receiving support services for my developmentally disabled child, he has developed a multitude of skills to help prepare him for his future in our society. My son can now read, enter and remain inside a grocery store for a short trip, and ride a bicycle. He has learned to trust others besides just me, improved his verbal communication, and is becoming more aware of the world and others around him. Financially, because of his improvements and stability through this program, I have been able to return to work and end our need for TANF and food stamps. I firmly believe that if the Family Support Program were to lose additional funding my son would be at high risk of backsliding and I may have to return full-time to the home environment to support his needs. His current PSWs work diligently helping him expand his world, stretch him beyond his existing limits, and give him the confidence to become as independent as he is able to be. This program has been a miraculous addition to my son's growth. For anyone that claims PSWs are simply caregivers, I hire caregivers for times I cannot be with my son and must be at work, and I assure you they are not of the caliber of PSWs through the FSP. If only they were!

I offer my sincerest thanks for those who had the foresight to develop this program and to those who keep it going. It benefits us all to invest now in the future children of our society, to help them become capable, producing citizens who have reached their full potential.

Sincerely,

Stephanee Bertrand

Mother of 3

2 in college, neuro-typical, age 21 & 19

1 developmentally disabled, age 8