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Date: March 21, 2020 at 6:22:07 PM PDT
To: Sen Gelser <Sen.SaraGelser@oregonlegislature.gov>
Subject: IDD/ORA Help List

Hi Senator – a few ideas for you as you put together an IDD/DHS COVID package below. Glad to answer any questions!

And THANK YOU for all you are doing.

- **Classify DSPs as “Health Care Workers”** – or go the route of other states around [grocery store workers](#) and classify them as **“emergency workers.”** This will allow them access to PPE (which is significant in the coming weeks as our DSPs have more and more anxiety about being at work – and worse as we have individuals that are sick and waiting for test results) and any other benefits from the emergency worker package (so far at least greater access to child care)
 - I think we are already covered under whichever list the Gov adopts for “essential businesses” but wouldn’t hurt to have someone say that on the record since 24/7 care necessary!
 - Right now we don’t have any access to PPE and desperately need it.
 - We also need basic essentials – like toilet paper and cleaning supplies. Are there state direct purchase opportunities here – we are ‘state partners’ on this job. 95%+ funded by state dollars and need to be pulled into all the supplies available to a nursing facility/etc.
- Include us in your **emergency funding package** – money is needed to cover all this overtime, replaced shifts and now the new FMLA. I’m not saying we oppose this, it’s needed. But the reality is this new leave program could wipe out our workforce in a day and folks are scared. The federal program is set to come online April 2nd. It covers an individual up to \$200 a day and \$10,000 cap and allows a worker to take the leave to care for a child who is home because schools are closed. For a provider who sees 40 workers take this – that is \$400,000 over the next 2-months. This will wipe our reserves, and possibly entire operations.
 - The new paid FML is 100% employer funded with a tax credit on the backend
 - The tax credit is against payroll taxes – so there will be some relief for non-profits – but this would be months/year out.
 - This requires an incredible amount of cash reserves – which you know these folks simply don’t have
 - We need an **immediate fund** to pull from for assistance for our members as their workforce takes advantage of this new paid leave program.
 - Could also provide 0% interest loan for monthly payroll payments, mortgage/rent payments, etc.
- **Increased funding for more staffing and investment in those that continue working** to support people's changing needs during this time. We are still waiting for the \$12M that was in the 2020 rebalance budget. Anything and everything will help.

- **Extend bedholds to 60 days** to accommodate if someone leaves a residential setting temporarily during this time. This could accommodate people who want to spend the next few weeks with family or if they are hospitalized for whatever reason.
- Encourage displaced workers to consider applying for jobs as Direct Support Professionals. Are there **hiring incentives** as part of a broader economic package? Training money for BOLI to get a workforce up and going for us and trained? As you know, before COVID-19, turnover rates within our workforce averaged 51%, and high vacancy rates are certain to be exacerbated by the coronavirus and the havoc it is wreaking on the health care system, schools and more.
- **Publicly recognize** the important work direct support professionals do in the community – as you do every day – but would probably help to have this done by the Governor one day – especially if/when she announces the “emergency worker” – see MN declaration and definition of emergency worker [here](#) – need to call out DSPs, PSWs, etc..

Amanda

On behalf of OR Resource Association



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