

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about Senate Bill 274, sponsored by Senator James Manning. The bill adjusts the age at which a person becomes eligible for case management from one of Oregon's fourteen community-led Support Services Brokerages. Instead of waiting until age 18, Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities would have the option to enroll with a Brokerage at the age of 14.

Offering Brokerage services to 14-year-olds will create new opportunities for young people and their families. The start of high school is a pivot point when we begin to consider what we want our adult lives to look like. By encouraging exploration and steps toward independence, we broaden the horizon of the future. There are also Employment First services and employment teams that come together around this time. It makes sense to promote case management continuity to support those goals.

Turning 18 is a difficult transition period in most lives and can be considerably more challenging for a young person with a disability. Decisions may have to be made, and action taken on Social Security, Medicaid eligibility, a change in medical providers, high school graduation, college, high school transition programs, and housing. We want to support young people and their families by helping them navigate this process alongside them.

Brokerages offer 18 years of experience as navigators, advocates, and connectors. Brokerages were designed, developed, and are governed by people with developmental disabilities and their families. There are nearly 100 people with developmental disabilities and their family members who sit on our governing boards, statewide.

We have been providing services to people living in their own or family homes since the Staley Settlement in 2001. We specialize in community-based case management, where you serve people wherever they live, and there is not a licensed residential services provider responsible for their care 24/7. Children and their families only just became eligible for in-home services with the K Plan in 2013.

We are excited to offer the option of our years of experience in this unique service to people as young as 14.