

August, 2020

To: Co-Chair Senator Peter Courtney
Co-Chair Speaker Tina Kotek
Vice-Chair Senator Fred Girod
Vice-Chair Representative Christine Drazan
Members of the Joint Committee On The Second Special Session of 2020
From: Katie Rose, Executive Director, Oregon Support Services Association
RE: Proposed reduction to Family to Family Networks serving Oregon families

The Oregon Support Services Association (OSSA) is a collective of the 14 Support Services Brokerages currently operating across the entire state of Oregon. We serve adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) living in their own or family homes, providing them with the case management and supports needed to connect them to community resources and direct service providers where they live.

We deeply appreciate that Brokerage case management services are not on the proposed reductions list. We write today in support of the Family to Family Networks, who are proposed in line 112 of the current list to be devastated by a two-thirds reduction to their operating costs. While Brokerages do not serve children, the adults and families who arrive at our services at 18 having been supported in values and training by Family Networks are better equipped to make efficient use of the IDD service system to build better lives.

The Family Networks decrease isolation for Oregon families, and increase their ability to engage and contribute in their communities. Every cut to a safety net like this makes the entire IDD service system less efficient. It leaves Oregon families without a trusted network to access trained peers. It leaves families who cannot secure federal Medicaid without any specialized DD support.

Oregon closed its intuitions for people with IDD decades ago, and we have invested heavily in community-centered supports. This has saved lives during the pandemic, keeping people out of the congregate care facilities in which so many have been lost to COVID-19. It also means that people with IDD are spread throughout Oregon's communities, with inconsistent access to information. Family Networks provide a trusted voice and source for resources, advice, support, and assistance during the countless individual crises Oregonian families have gone through since the start of this pandemic. *Now is not the time to sever this important connection by critically reducing Family Networks.*



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oregonsupportservices.org

Thank you for keeping our network of support for children and families with IDD in your minds as you negotiate these extraordinary budget cuts and reductions. Please keep them safe from reductions that would decimate their ability to do good work for Oregon families.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Santiago, Community Pathways
Sarah Noack, UCP Connections
Laura Noppenberger, Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage
Larry Deal, Independence Northwest
Adam Ayers, Resource Connections of Oregon
Barbara Hedrick, Creative Supports, Inc
Rachel Harmon, Inclusion, Inc
Anne Crites, Mentor Oregon Mid-Valley
Brian Sexton, Mentor Oregon Metro
Heather Hopkins-Slechta, Full Access High Desert
Angela Dionne, Integrated Services Network
Robin Mouser, Connections Case Management
Sandy Leifeste, Full Access
Dan Peccia, Self-Determination Resources, Inc
Katie Rose, Oregon Support Services Association