

**Adult & People with Disabilities Budget Testimony
Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Human Services
April 13, 2021**

Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Nosse and members of the Committee, I am pleased to submit this testimony on SB 5529, specifically in support of long term services and supports for adult and people with disabilities. I am Ruth Gulyas, CEO of LeadingAge Oregon – the statewide association of not-for-profit and other mission-directed organizations dedicated to providing quality housing and services to the elderly. Our members include nursing homes, residential care, assisted living, home care agencies, continuing care retirement facilities known as CCRCs and federally subsidized housing for low-income seniors. LeadingAge Oregon is also a member of the Campaign for Seniors and People with Disabilities that has also submitted testimony on SB 5529 in support of programs and services for the most vulnerable impacted by the pandemic.

Long term care providers and staff have been at the forefront of the pandemic doing their best every day to keep seniors safe amongst the everchanging landscape. Covid-19 has exacerbated an existing staffing challenge in long term care. While we support all budget investments contained in the Campaign’s testimony, we want to highlight those critical to bolstering providers and caregivers following the stresses of the past year.

LeadingAge Oregon supports and urges funding for:

Providing cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for Medicaid reimbursement rates for long term care providers:

- **5% COLA for community based care providers** including assisted living, residential care and in-home care agencies for both years of the 2021-2023 biennium.
- **Rebase nursing facility rates** at the 62nd percentile per Oregon law.
- **Increase adult foster home rates.**
- **Extend the temporary 5% COVID-19 Medicaid rate** due to expire at the end of June 2021 until the end of the public health crisis.

Enhancing Adult and People with Disabilities’ (APD) capacity to respond to the pandemic through funding several initiatives and proposals in the Governor’s Recommended Budget that include but are not limited to:

- Six infectious disease specialist positions to provide technical assistance on infectious disease prevention and response to senior congregate care settings,
- An initiative - the Oregon Essential Worker Healthcare Trust - to retain essential health care workers by improving access to quality health care benefits for caregivers,
- Training and apprenticeship programs for Certified Nursing Assistants,
- Virtual visits and technology supports to improve care and socialization for seniors.

Investing in long term services and support through leveraging federal funds:

- Oregon's federal matching rate allows us to collect almost 70 cents from the federal government for every state dollar spent to support Oregon's seniors and people with disabilities on Medicaid.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our funding priorities. We urge your recommendation to secure needed funding for seniors and people with disabilities.