

Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Steiner Hayward, and Co-Chair Rayfield,

My name is Nancy Johnson from Washington County and I am a Services Coordinator Supervisor for the In-Home Team, those are individuals who live in their own homes or family home. I am writing today in support of increased investment in the I/DD case management budget.

The Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs represents the Community Developmental Disability Programs (CDDP's), which provide services to individuals and families of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in all 36 counties of Oregon. Washington County CDDP is part of AOCMHP. CDDP's provide a variety of services, including case management for individuals experiencing I/DD, licensing of Adult Foster Homes, and overseeing abuse investigations.

At AOCMHP and Washington County, we believe that everyone deserves to feel safe and live with independence. This is the core goal for I/DD case managers working for CDDPs. Case managers are often a primary resource for individuals with I/DD, helping them set life goals, then helping to create the path to reach them. This could mean support finding employment, the right place to live, the right health care provider or support worker or even a good, nearby hiking trail.

During crises, case managers are often a lifeline for individuals with I/DD and their families. As the historic wildfires were unfolding this summer, case managers in impacted counties contacted countless families and individuals in their care, letting them know of the evacuation orders, and in some cases, helping them find shelter. Without the hard work of these case managers, we fear that some individuals with I/DD and their families would have never known to evacuate. Throughout Covid-19, case managers have been critical in assisting individuals with I/DD receive vaccinations, get tested, and adhere to life-saving public health protocols.

However, for case managers to be effective, they must have a reasonable caseload. Over the past four years, Oregon has underfunded this system. As a result, caseloads around the state have increased, putting those with I/DD at greater risk for bad outcomes. As we begin our road to recovery from the pandemic, it is critical that we bolster and protect individuals with I/DD and their families.

In Washington County caseload sizes average approximately 70 individuals per Services Coordinator. During the pandemic and the wildfires other ways Services Coordinators supported the individuals we serve and their families with locating resources such as food, rent and utility assistance, cleaning supplies and PPE especially to those in quarantine. Not only did Services Coordinators assist individuals and their families in finding vaccine clinics but registering for them as needed. Services Coordinators also assisted at vaccine clinics on the weekends. Since we were not able to conduct face to face visits during the pandemic, Services Coordinators assisted families in accessing required assessments and Individual Support Plan meetings through virtual means. Enrollment in services has not slowed down, newly eligible children and adults are being assigned almost daily and caseloads continue to increase, thus making it increasingly difficult to provide the quality service that is so important.

I strongly urge you to fully fund the I/DD case management budget. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Johnson