



February 28, 2023

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

From: Natasha Atkinson, Executive Director, Umpqua Homes Inc. (UHI)

RE: **Support** for House Bill **2457**

Please prioritize DD wages and support full funding of IDD services in HB 5026. I am asking that you not only protect your previous investment, but that you continue to help move this workforce out of crisis by supporting HB 2457 - it moves DSP wages to 150% of minimum wage.

UHI serves over 40 individuals who experience Intellectual/ Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in Douglas County. Each person is assisted by a team of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). UHI currently has over 150 employees, working throughout Douglas County.

DSPs are the very backbone of our industry. A great DSP is an individual that can smoothly transition from preparing and administering medications, to encouraging the individual to advocate for a strong change in their lives and then seamlessly assist someone through a challenging moment. This complicated, difficult work is often paid less than fast food employees. Please **support HB 2457**, to show we value these remarkable DSPs.

Last session, due to your wonderful investment we were able to fund the new Rate Models. We are forever grateful, as here at UHI, it allowed us to raise the DSP wage by over \$1.25 an hour. Without this investment in our system we would not have survived the past year.

HB 2457 serves to protect and enhance last year's investment. Even though the rate models were fully funded, the current reimbursements were built on case studies done years ago, prior to the pandemic. These models are now significantly behind the current market. Please see the flyer below, it highlights key points and shows how DSP wages consistently trend above the reimbursement rate.

Please vote **YES** on **HB 2457**. This bill helps to ensure that DSPs are paid a wage they deserve, by moving wages to 150% minimum wage and covering the Paid Leave Oregon Payroll expense. Please vote yes, DSPs, the people they support and their families are counting on your support!