

Date: February 28, 2023

To: Joint Subcommittee on Human Services

From: Jenny Cisneros – Mother and DD Advisory Council Member

RE: Support Full Funding for I/DD Case Managers!

Co-Chair Campos, Co-Chair Valderrama, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jenny Cisneros, and I am a mother of three daughters, one of which has been diagnosed with Developmental Disabilities and receiving Washington County CCDP services.

The process of obtaining support for a young girl with a disability is quite long and sometimes complicated for a mother with many responsibilities. During the several years my daughter was in school, I had multiple meetings with professionals to find the best help for her and she often times did not receive adequate services and therefore had extremely slow and almost non-existent progress. Added to this, the process to get the services was long and required many steps and questions. I always had to fill out forms twice because I had twins. Although only one qualified for services, it was very difficult to take care of two girls with sensory issues, fill out double applications, and answer the long list of questions. On top of this, the discrimination or assumptions that I had to deal with for having two daughters with disabilities, plus being Latina, led me to extreme exhaustion. Just when I thought I was going to give up and couldn't take it anymore, a worker from Washington County called to say she was going to help me. Having met Angelina, our case Manager at the time, was not only a good experience and very helpful, but I also felt that I was treated with respect and solidarity. She was our case manager, and she truly took on the case, being in constant communication with me, informing me and advising me of which were the most efficient ways of obtaining better results. After that, and with a lot of effort, positive objectives were achieved. I know that there were times where we had to wait a long time for processes, but it was because the social workers were overwhelmed with their workload, especially throughout the pandemic. Case Managers such as Angelina are vital to ensuring that a person with any type of disability and their family receive the services they need to achieve a successful life within their limitations. Valerie has made significant progress and is now a college student attending mainstream classes, while I have been able to reinstitute my higher education in the US and apply this professional development in my role as a DD Advisory Council member. Valerie and I have since founded a nonprofit organization to give back and serve our community through workshops and events that are inclusive to all.

In their Agency Request Budget (ARB), ODHS included a Policy Option Package to fully fund these programs, recognizing the important role that CCDPs play in local communities. While this POP was not included in the Governor's Budget, full funding for these programs remains critical. Full funding will allow us to better serve those with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability (I/DD). I call on the authorities in charge to fully fund this budget in order to continue funding WCDD support programs so that the aid is extended to many more families such as ours.

Sincerely,
Jenny Cisneros