

Submitter: Dawn Cooper

On Behalf Of: Columbia County CDDP

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services

Measure: HB5026

Date: March 3, 2023

To: Joint Subcommittee on Human Services

From: Dawn Cooper, Columbia County CDDP

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

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

My name is Dawn Cooper and I am a DD Services Coordinator for adults with the Columbia County CDDP/Columbia Community Mental Health DD Program. I am also the single mother of two young daughters who receive I/DD services and one who does not, so I feel that you may benefit from my unique dual perspective.

Oregonians thrive when we have a roof over our heads, a job that we love, and are supported by people that help us live our best life. In Columbia County, our CDDP provides support from birth through end of life to as many people as are found eligible for services and choose us as providers. I can't count the amount of times as a Services Coordinator/Case Manager for adults that I have been able to reach out and help a client access a resource that made it possible for them to find housing or food when they had none, to receive help with the activities of daily living that you and I take for granted, or to make connections with others that deeply enriched their lives. I have helped clients navigate a justice system they don't understand, a medical system where they feel ignored, and a school system where they risk being just shuffled along instead of having education needs met. Nearly every month I help connect clients with support providers who are able to help them with necessary tasks like grocery shopping, hygiene, cooking, cleaning, and making connections with family and friends. I help the teams that are created for clients navigate problems ranging from how to budget money, or how to best help someone keep their home clean, to initiating hospice care for end of life. Through all this, I try to prioritize quality of life for each.

As a mother of children receiving DD case management, I wanted to share how important this service is, even though I am familiar with the resources and systems. As a parent, when my child experienced a crisis situation that threatened herself and others, all of my hard earned training and experience was worthless as I became an

emotional mess of worry for my child. Without my daughter's case manager there to take me to a quiet location to talk through the situation, the possible options, and how to best keep my child, our family, and everyone else around her safe, I don't know how I would have gotten through it. Her case manager made sure to advocate with her school to ensure that she continued to receive the education she has the right to receive, while also helping me to put safety strategies into place at home with a Behavior Consultant. I can't imagine how much harder it is for parents who both aren't familiar with these systems and who don't have access to case management. This is a service that directly changes and improves the lives of children and adults across the state of Oregon, for the better.

CDDP's across Oregon have not reached full funding for our budget in several years. We have also been experiencing continuously rising numbers of clients and as our caseloads increase, we continue to strive to provide the best quality of care to each client that we can, but each case manager is only one person. Without full funding, the caseloads will rise past the point of burning out our talented service coordinators and we will experience turnover that is deeply disruptive to clients as many clients take a long time to build trust enough to even accept help. Because case managers are the main person that many clients have to turn to, they become very distressed and disrupted when turnover occurs. By fully funding CDDP's, caseloads can stay within reasonable bounds so case managers can help every client with those basic and fundamental needs in a timely manner.

On behalf of myself, my CDDP, and my family, I urge you to fully fund this budget!

Sincerely,

Dawn Cooper