

Monday, Feb. 12, 2024

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, members of the Senate Health Care Committee, my name is Shasta Kearns Moore. I represent Advocates for Disability Supports^[1], a grassroots group advocating for a paid parent caregiver option for Oregon's Medicaid client children. We have garnered thousands of supporters^[2] over more than four years of advocacy on this issue^[3]. My testimony, with citations and graphics, has been submitted to OLIS.

A paid parent caregiver option, popularized during the COVID-19 pandemic, has been in place in states like Colorado for decades^[4]. Last session, Oregon's legislature voted nearly unanimously^[5] to establish a permanent program. However, implementation issues have arisen. Legislators were surprised to learn that the program will only serve 155 children^[6], out of an expected 1,400. (*Please see graphic below.*) By comparison, during the Public Health Emergency, about 440 children were able to participate in the temporary paid parent caregiver program.

States like Arizona^[7], Washington^[8], and Idaho have pursued permanent programs, viewing them as budget-neutral solutions to fulfilling in-home caregiver hours. Oregon's political landscape differs, so we appreciate Sen. Hayden's proposal based on utilization rates, which aligns with the Department of Human Services' budgeting. We urge that children at least have access to what the department has budgeted and what their peers can access. We expect LFO will also recognize this as a budget-neutral proposal to fulfill past promises of support to Oregon's high-needs children.

ADS also supports the amendment that would allow families the freedom to access future Medicaid options for in-home support.

SB 1565 maintains the framework and safeguards of SB 91. It also offers a simple, cost-effective solution to the eligibility issue, ensuring children have access to their promised support. Please help us address this vital issue for Oregon disability families. Thank you.

Shasta Kearns Moore

Pay Family Caregivers National Coalition
Advocates for Disability Supports

^[1] <https://www.facebook.com/ADSOregon/>

^[2] Petition with more than 4,200 signatures:

<https://www.change.org/p/kate-brown-choice-in-care-providers-for-children-with-disabilities?recruiter=10598363>

[12&recruited_by_id=15651bf0-6c76-11ea-b623-bbf39617611c&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=petition_dashboard](https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/idd/Documents/2024-2029-cen-waiver-application-en.PDF)

[3] Portfolio with dozens of pages of testimony:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mPH3D80NrEqCOjmZV7vd3crO2Ab10wOAP7q9Pv97NSQ/edit?usp=sharing>

[4] American Academy of Pediatrics 2022 study on the efficacy of Colorado's program:

<https://publications.aap.org/journal-blogs/blog/20302/Employing-Family-as-Caregivers?autologincheck=redirected>

[5] SB 91 passed 24-0 in the Senate and 48-1 in the House:

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Measures/Overview/SB91>

[6] Children's Extraordinary Needs waiver application:

<https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/idd/Documents/2024-2029-cen-waiver-application-en.PDF>

[7] Arizona report:

https://www.azahcccs.gov/Resources/Downloads/Federal/PPCG_AppendixA-BudgetNeutrality.pdf

[8] Washington DSHS report:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/DDA/dda/documents/E2SHB%201694%20Sec%2011%20Feasibility%20Study.pdf>

