

I am Dalan Moss from Warrenton. I am employed by a non-profit organization that supports adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). I am advocating for people with IDD, the heroes who support them, and provider agencies that coordinate logistics so those heroes can focus on supporting people. Supporting people with IDD is not just providing basic needs, but also empowering them to live a life they choose and contribute to the community despite their disabilities.

Specifically, I ask you to please consider the recommendations of the Burns & Associates Rate and Wage study as you establish the State budget.

The cost of providing services to people with IDD in today's economy exceeds the current rates provided by the State. The current funding was framed around direct support wages that are significantly lower than today's competitive wages. The most critical issue agency providers face is attracting and retaining qualified direct care staff. Providers operate in a deficit to pay as much in wages and benefits as possible, but we are still unable to compete with the starting wages of other businesses that don't support people with IDD. Our organization has had to reduce the number of people we can support because of insufficient staffing.

Most providers are spreading more administrative responsibilities across fewer indirect care staff to reduce the deficit spending.

Currently no funding to IDD services can keep up with the perpetually increasing costs of rents, repairs, utilities, insurance, groceries, and other everyday needs. This applies to organizations that provide homes and basic needs to people with IDD as well as to direct support workers who try to live on wages allowed by the current rates.

These challenges facing IDD services is reflective of most providers in Oregon. Please do not judge the needs of the entire IDD system based on a few targeted providers that appear to be excessively successful. This can leave the false impression that IDD services are sufficiently funded. I fear decisions damaging to IDD services have already been made based on that perception.

All IDD programs are beneficial and need funding increases, but because the Burns & Associates recommendations exceed the available State funds, people with IDD might benefit the most if the funding was prioritized as follows:

1. Residential services (Ex. 24-hour Group Homes, Foster Homes, and Supported Living): These programs provide 24-hour support to people in their homes. Finding and keeping direct care staff are the most challenging for these programs.
2. Community interactive services (Ex. Employment, Brokerage Services, Day Support Activities): These programs help people learn how to interact with and become more self-reliant in the community.
3. Day Support Activities/In-Home Supports-Standard Model: Funding for these programs comes closer to the needs than the other programs

Please support people with IDD by considering the Burns & Associates recommendations!

Thank you,

