



Testimony in Support of Increased IDD Funding in the 2025–27 DHS Budget

Co-Chairs Leiber and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of increased funding for services supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). My name is Brenda Linden and I represent Dungarvin Oregon, LLC, a provider of essential services to individuals with IDD across Oregon.

We are urging you to support an investment in IDD services in Oregon in the 2025-27 budget to address the **\$558 million gap** in the provider reimbursement rates. For the first time, thanks to the **DHS Wage & Rate Study**—which the legislature wisely commissioned—we now have a concrete number that reveals the **true gap** between what the state reimburses and what it actually costs to provide high-quality services to people with IDD.

This number is significant, but it reflects **decades of chronic underfunding** and an **urgent need** to invest in this critical workforce. We are asking legislators to do **everything possible** to move us toward closing this gap—because without action, we are on the brink of collapse.

The Reality on the Ground

Right now, providers across Oregon—including my organization—are struggling to survive. Costs continue to rise, yet we cannot raise rates or wages on our own. **Service disruptions, high staff turnover, and reduced access** are becoming the norm for the people we support—many of whom require consistent, high-quality care to live safely and with dignity.

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) Deserve Better

Our **Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)** are the backbone of our system. They do essential, skilled, and often demanding work—supporting people with complex needs in their homes, at work, and in the community. And yet, they are **paid far below sustainable levels**.

To remain competitive, especially with fast food and retail employers in our area, we pay DSPs about **\$3.50 more per hour** than the state’s reimbursement model allows (which is currently \$18.77/hour). This means we are stretching every dollar just to offer wages that barely compete with entry-level jobs elsewhere. This is not sustainable.

The Impact is Real

When DSPs leave, the people we support suffer. They are forced to adjust to new staff, sometimes over and over again. This constant disruption undermines their progress and well-being. Our hiring pool is shrinking, turnover is high, and burnout is even higher. We cannot attract or retain the staff we need without better funding—and that starts with increasing rates to reflect **true competitive wages**.

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Let me tell you a story: I was visiting one of our 24-hour homes last year and was speaking with a staff member who has been with Dungarvin for over 12 years. He has worked in the same home, supporting the same individuals during that time. He is a well-educated man that could go anywhere and make far more than he does with us, but he stays for the individuals he supports. We were discussing hiring and turnover in the programs when he said one of the most impactful statements I have ever heard. During his tenure, there have been at least 300 staff that have worked in that home. That is 300 people that have seen these individuals naked and provided the most intimate of care needs. Think about that for yourself, or your family members. How would that feel to know you need this support and have to continue to allow strangers to see you naked and provide this care every day. Then just when you build a relationship with one staff person and begin to trust them, they are gone, and the next stranger comes in. That is the reality for many of the people served in the IDD field each and every day.

IDD Providers Are at a Breaking Point

Unlike other industries, we can't raise prices or tap into private pay markets. There are **no built-in cost-of-living adjustments**. We rely almost entirely on **state and federal funding**.

To stay open, many providers—ours included—have already reduced programs, cut administrative staff, and delayed necessary improvements. Just in the last 2-years, Dungarvin has closed six 24-hour homes and is currently in the midst of closing three more this year. Without increased investment, we'll be forced to make even harder choices. Some providers have already shut their doors. More will follow.

Legislative Action is Needed Now

This is a **workforce crisis** that cannot wait until the next budget cycle. We need immediate and meaningful investment to stabilize and strengthen services for individuals with IDD.

That's why we're asking you to:

1. **Support HB 2150-2**, which adds a cost-of-living adjustment for IDD services—an essential measure to prevent further erosion.
2. **Champion increased funding for IDD services** in the 2025–27 DHS budget.
3. **Prioritize filling the \$558 million gap** and commit to doing everything possible to close it—this budget cycle and beyond.

The people we support—our neighbors, friends, and family members—deserve to live with dignity, stability, and access to the services they need. The DSPs who care for them deserve fair, livable wages. And our provider network deserves the resources necessary to do our jobs well and sustainably.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to the IDD community. We are counting on you.

Sincerely,



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