



February 3, 2025

To Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee:

Everyone deserves the supports they need to thrive, regardless of family circumstances or labels. The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition is principally concerned about three proposed budget reductions that would have detrimental impacts on access to supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Those reductions proposed by ODHS include:

1. Eliminating eligibility for children who qualify for Medicaid Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) under the “Parental Income Disregard”;
2. Removing eligibility for individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder “Level 1”; and
3. Delays to provider rate increases approved by the 2025 Legislature that funded Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages and other essential services for people with IDD.

Parental Income Disregard

Eliminating the policy that allows children to qualify for Medicaid LTSS regardless of parents’ income would mean over 2,300 children would lose those long-term supports. That is over 20% of all children with IDD currently receiving those services. It would push families on the cusp of poverty into poverty, and children would only qualify for services if their parents earned less than 138% of the Federal Poverty Line. Historically, prior to the policy of excluding parental income, families faced difficult choices. Some parents would separate, divorce, or choose not to marry so their combined incomes would not disqualify their children from services. Others gave up custody of their children to secure the care they themselves could not afford to provide. Taking away the “Parental Income Disregard” means that families would lose access to services such as attendant care, home modifications, and highly specialized medical supplies (diets and diapers for older children). Losing attendant care may also affect parental employment options, compounding budgetary problems with loss of income tax revenue and increased reliance on public assistance.

Autism “Level 1”

Removing eligibility for those diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder “Level 1” means loss of key supports during critical stages of early development. It is important to remember that many symptoms of autism do not unmask themselves until certain times in a child’s life—starting school, engaging in social interactions, or beginning the transition to adulthood. Many



children thought to be “Level 1” early in life are suddenly diagnosed with more severe forms of Autism (“Level 2” or “Level 3”) in their later years. The underlying impairments were always there, but simply had not been recognized until placed in new environments. By denying children with ASD “Level 1”, they will have missed out on supports most important in early childhood worsening lifelong outcomes in education, employment, and independent living.

Delaying Rate Increases

The rate increases promised to agency providers in June of 2025 merely scratched the surface of what is actually required to stabilize the DSP workforce. Every day, providers and DSPs empower individuals with IDD by fostering their independence, dignity, and connections to the communities in which they live. Despite their commitment to transform the lives of the clients they serve, stagnant rates and wages fail to value their work.

The Rate & Wage Study, commissioned by the Oregon Legislature and released in January 2025 provides concrete evidence of the financial shortfall that is destabilizing the workforce. The study found that an additional \$558 million is required to bridge the funding gap and prevent Oregon’s IDD service system from falling further behind. Delaying promised rate increases will continue to drive high turnover rates that threaten quality and continuity of care.

For the reasons outlined above, the Oregon DD Coalition recommends that you reject proposals to eliminate eligibility for entire populations of individuals with IDD that are hard to reverse or to delay much-needed funding for those who provide essential services.

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is a group of approximately 30 organizations across Oregon that promote quality services, equity, and community integration for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Our members include the Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition (a statewide coalition of people with I/DD or “self-advocates”), peer-based family support organizations, support services brokerages, advocacy organizations, and developmental disability providers and the DD Act Network Partners.