

From: Denise Guedon
To: [JWMHS Exhibits](#)
Subject: proposed budget cuts to OPI
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I am the parent of an adult child with a developmental disability. I have worked in the field of developmental disabilities for 30 years. 10 years as a social worker for a county DD program and for the past 20 years as a medical foster parent specializing in providing round the clock care to children with complex medical and developmental disabilities.

My entire life has revolved around and been consumed by experiences involving the care and support of individuals with disabilities. More specifically what is involved with providing care for such people in home settings.

I am familiar with OPI and how that program likely contributed to services like in home family supports for people with DD. I assume the "K" plan here in Oregon is linked to funds through OPI as well. I just want to say that I am very alarmed to read that OPI funding for people, children and or adults with DD, is earmarked for severe cuts if not elimination.

I will tell you that my personal opinion as well as many, many, others in the field was from the onset that the "K" plan was not well planned or managed from the get go in the DD programs. I can't tell you how many of us who were so over joyed to see the availability of these funds and services made available through the "K" plan, stood up and expressed grave concerns about how the funds were being allocated in a way that would make the plan fiscally unsustainable in the long term.

Having said that however, to severely cut or eliminate OPI funds to DD populations will never the less be catastrophic for those children and adults living in our communities. It is not the fault of the disabled individuals or their families that these "K" plan funds were so poorly allocated. These funds absolutely provided essential supports to these children and adults with DD and enabled them to live independently in the community or to remain living with their families in their homes.

Putting aside the matters of health, safety, and human dignity, when it comes down to the brass knuckles of the matter, the state of Oregon is going to end up going in the hole fiscally speaking by pulling these funds from this population of folks. It is a well documented fact that it is far more cost effective to provide supports to keep children with developmental disabilities in their family homes verses paying someone like me, or even worse a group home or facility to care for them. It goes the same for adults with DD who can be supported to live independently in our communities with in home supports verses in a group home or facility setting.

It may look good in the moment on paper to cut these services for the DD population when struggling with budget matters, but in the long term you'll just be sucking money out of the medicaid program to have these folks cared for in a fashion that provides for a lower quality of life, less dignity, and in a much more expensive model of care.

I am in a unique position actually, in that I am in a sense both a consumer as the parent of an adult child with a disability that is dependent on funded support services in order to live independently in the community, and at the same time a person who's employment and livelihood could potentially benefit from OPI funds being cut I believe. I say that because there will be even more need and demand for out of home care for DD folks if you cut these OPI funds. Hence more business for me I suppose. So I am talking to you as someone that is trying very hard to look at this as objectively as possible.

My daughters quality of life, dignity, and independence are of course my priority. The "long term" fiscal stability of funding to support Oregon's citizens with DD is the only way that is sustainable in the long run. I hope you can represent the relay these thoughts and concerns in your deliberations around making these very difficult decisions around our state budget.

Denise Guedon