



Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee.

My name is Sarah Frazzini, I am the Executive Director of Benco. I urge you to prioritize funding for Developmental Disability Services, and more specifically in DSP Wages, DD Case Management and Regional Family Networks.

Benco is a non-profit IDD provider in Benton County. We provide essential support services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in 3 service settings; 24-hour residential, supported living, and in-home supports. In each of these service settings we rely on our Direct Support Professional work force to provide the greatest level of care, performing highly skilled interactions and person-centered support as they have been trained.

Providing a safe, secure, and high quality of life, honoring personalized supports and self-determination drive the work that we do each day. We can do this best when there is stability and consistency in our workforce and when there is a robust structure that supports the entire DD system including case management, and family networks. Unfortunately, that is not the case and has been our struggle for decades. This is a systemic issue that the legislature can fix.

Fully fund DD services.

It remains a high priority to make a long-term change that is tied to the minimum wage increase. The small increases which have been approved in previous legislative sessions have not provided the staff stability that we need. It should be noted that there is great inequity in pay for services which needs to be addressed between a PSW and a DSP. Our DSP workforce is paid a significantly lower amount than the PSW who does the same job in the same service setting as our DSP's. This is a complex issue and must be resolved.

Benco employs 85 DSP's, as of today we have 264 open hours needing to be filled by new employees that we can't hire or retain. Each time minimum wage increases, we struggle to make the necessary changes to our wage scales to be able to offer just above minimum wage. In the 2020 year, Benco's turnover rate was at 50% with the majority of employees separating voluntarily after only being employed a few days to 2 years. Upon separation the feedback collected confirms that the low rate of pay is the key reason for leaving. This unfortunate phenomenon leaves a revolving door of people in and out of a supported person's life and leaves the dedicated staff who are left drained and hopeless.

We need investment in the DD system. Through the pandemic it became blatantly obvious that the resources that people with disabilities needed were not there or very difficult to navigate. Providers, Family Networks, Direct Support Professionals and DD Case Managers stepped up regardless of the lack of funding and have provided essential lifelines to Oregonians with disabilities and their families during these very uncertain times. Please fund these vital programs to ensure this vulnerable population has the supports they need, when they need them.

Sincerely,

Sarah Frazzini, Benco ED

**Benco**  
*Caring Without Limits*