

Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Steiner Hayward, and Co-Chair Rayfield,

My name is Matthew Clark, Program Manager of Community Living Case Management. I am speaking today in support of increased investment in the I/DD case management budget. The Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs represents the Community Developmental Disability Programs, which provide services to individuals and families of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities in all 36 counties of Oregon. CDDP's provide a variety of services, including case management for individuals experiencing I/DD, licensing of Adult Foster Homes, and overseeing abuse investigations.

At AOCMHP and Community Living Case Management, we believe that everyone deserves to feel safe and live with independence. This is the core goal for I/DD case managers working for CDDPs. Case managers are often a lifeline for individuals with I/DD, helping them set life goals, then helping to create the path to reach them. This could mean support finding employment, the right place to live, the right health care provider or support worker or even a good, nearby hiking trail.

During crises, case managers are often a lifeline for individuals with I/DD and their families. As the historic wildfires were unfolding this summer, case managers in impacted counties went door-to-door to ensure that the families in their care were able to find shelter and evacuate their homes. Without the hard work of these case managers, we fear that individuals with I/DD and their families would have never known to evacuate. Throughout Covid-19, case managers have been critical in assisting individuals with I/DD receive vaccinations, get tested, and adhere to life-saving public health protocols.

However, for case managers to be effective, they must have a reasonable caseload. Over the past four years, Oregon has underfunded this system. As a result, caseloads around the state have increased, putting those with I/DD at greater risk for bad outcomes. As we begin our road to recovery from the pandemic, it is critical that we bolster and protect individuals with I/DD and their families.

Southern Oregon Rural and Coastal families rely on Case Managers to be present and available when needed to not only navigate the ever-changing I/DD System, but to provide guidance during uncertain times of wildfires and a pandemic. Case Managers have had to become creative with how they provide services to individuals and their families. Meeting in parks, driveways, driving by homes and waving through windows and meeting virtually have become the new normal.

Case managers are doing everything they can to provide quality case management, but when caseload numbers are reaching levels of 55-65 individuals per case manager, providing effective case management becomes increasingly difficult. The case management system is already overwhelmed with fatigue, and we can only do so much when underfunded. We need increased funding to best serve individuals with I/DD in our communities.

I strongly urge you to fully fund the I/DD case management budget.

Thank you.