

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

My name is Kim Cota and I am the Program Manager of Clackamas County's Developmental Disabilities Program. I am here today to voice my support of increased investment in the I/DD case management budget.

The Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP) represents the Community Developmental Disability Programs, or CDDPs. These CDDPs provide services to individuals and families of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in all 36 counties of Oregon. My CDDP is part of AOCMHP. CDDPs provide a variety of services, including case management for individuals experiencing I/DD, licensing of Adult Foster Homes, the investigations of allegations of abuse of adults experiencing I/DD, and we are the lynch pin connecting hundreds of Personal Support Workers to children and adults receiving services in their homes and communities.

AOCMHP and Clackamas County share the fundamental belief that everyone deserves to feel safe and live with independence. This is the core goal of I/DD case managers working for CDDPs. Case managers are often a critical connection 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 a lifeline for individuals with I/DD and their families. Throughout Covid-19, Clackamas County case managers have been critical in assisting individuals with I/DD adhere to life-saving public health protocols, find and receive testing, and ultimately receive vaccinations. To date, Clackamas County case managers have helped connect over 47% of the people supported by the CDDP through to full vaccination. This is almost 1,000 people experiencing I/DD fully vaccinated.

As the historic wildfires were unfolding this summer, case managers in Clackamas County connected with over 2,000 individuals and their families, as well as residential providers operating Group Homes and Foster Homes, to ensure that the people they serve were able to find shelter and evacuate their homes. They did this while they were waiting to see if they themselves would have to evacuate, and continued working even when they were ultimately displaced. They did this for weeks as the fires raged. Without the hard work of these case managers, we fear that some individuals with I/DD and their families may have never known to evacuate, or where to find safety and shelter.

The devastating Ice Storm that also hit Clackamas County disproportionately hard is yet another example of when case managers went above and beyond for people with I/DD. Regardless of how the event impacted them personally, they began contacting people to ensure they were safe, connecting them to emergency shelters and safe transportation. They coordinated welfare checks for people and connected people to generators. Case managers contacted over 2,000 people to ensure their health and safety, and continued to stay connected as people went without power for up to two weeks. This work undoubtedly saved lives.

For case managers to effectively provide these services, 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 the pandemic continues and ultimately as we begin the road to recovery, it is critical that we bolster and protect individuals with I/DD and their families.

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

Thank you for your time.