



February 8, 2023

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services,

My name is Anna Keenan-Mudrick, and I am submitting this written testimony to explain why **the Community Providers Association of Oregon passionately supports the passage of HB 2457.**

We first want to acknowledge what you, our incredible Oregon legislative body, achieved, in support of its citizens with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and of our essential, amazing, yet historically marginalized workforce. **In 2021 you approved the full funding of our then new rate model, effective July of 2022; an unprecedented achievement, that has supported many of us to move beyond the brink of provider agency destabilization. Thank you for this!**

One of the most critical and appreciated features of this current rate model is its transparency – we can see the mechanics of it, which gives us the ability to individually adjust for market-driven cost changes that evolve over time. **Which leads me to why we are returning to you now with this important piece of legislation, which provides for a very informed and accurate lever to adjust our most vital cost driver.**

Our rate model's current level of funding is based on costs that are now several years outdated, the largest change being the rate of pay of our direct workforce. **To address the organic fluctuation of workforce costs of our labor market more adeptly, so that we as providers can respond proactively and soundly to stabilize wage adjustments, will prepare us to continue to stave off Direct Support Professional capacity crisis, which then allows us to continue providing essential services, thereby protecting Oregonians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.**

After many years of a nationwide caregiver workforce crisis, now exacerbated by the economic, inflationary housing, food, transportation and childcare cost impacts, plus the overall change in employee expectations raised to the surface by COVID, we must be able to ensure that our rates respond to the market more readily to keep those we support and serve healthy and safe. And our incredible, diverse DSP workforce deserves nothing less than a fair, professional, equitable rate of pay for the varied, complex, and vital work that they do!

Thank you so much for your diligence, and ongoing support!

Most Sincerely,

Anna Keenan-Mudrick, MSW
Executive Director of Community Access Services
Legislative Chair for Community Providers Association of Oregon