



February 7, 2023

To: Sen. Gelser Blouin, Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Em Braman, Chair, Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition

RE: SB 576 Support for People with Disabilities to Work and Keep their Medicaid Benefits, Including Developmental Disability Services

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Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is a group of approximately 40 organizations across Oregon that promote quality services, equity and community integration for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. Our members include a statewide coalition of people with DD, peer-based family support organizations, support services brokerages, advocacy organizations and DD service providers.

All Oregonians have the right to work, earn a living and be members of their communities. Yet, for Oregonians with disabilities who work and depend on Medicaid, they must worry about earning an income and losing access to these vital services. Medicaid services give Oregonians with disabilities access to healthcare and support services to live and work in their communities. When people lose access to the very support services that help them stay healthy, keep their jobs and allow them to be community members, their lives destabilize. We support SB 576 because it removes the income and resource limit barriers that make it difficult for people with disabilities to keep their support services while working.

We have heard from our members with developmental disabilities that the Employed Persons with Disabilities program has been a key reason they have been able to have meaningful careers and live in their communities. Without the program, people with DD would have to choose between keeping the supports that allow them to be successful or struggling to keep a job or live without support.

The Employed Persons with Disabilities Program, referenced in SB 576, currently has a low monthly premium payment that program participants must pay to maintain their Medicaid coverage and services. This low premium is key to keeping the program accessible, allowing people with disabilities to access the program and still have some money in their pockets. Yet, SB 576 allows the Department to consider the income of program participants when setting the premium or other cost sharing requirements. We strongly recommend that any



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participant premium or cost responsibilities not be a burden on people with disabilities. People with disabilities should not be forced to pay large amounts in premium to keep their support services.

Oregon has worked for years to implement the Lane v. Brown settlement and the Employment First Policy. As a result, thousands of people with DD are working in Oregon's communities. Now it is time to take the next step to remove barriers and allow thousands of Oregonians with DD to equitably access supports that help them maintain their lives in Oregon's communities.

People with DD deserve to work in fulfilling careers without compromising the support they need to live full lives. Please support SB 576.