

April 6, 2023

To the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Amanda Watters and I am the Executive Director of Neurotherapeutic Pediatric Therapies.

We are one of many nonprofits in Oregon that promotes the well-being of Oregonians every day. Some of the critical services our organization provides include occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy for children with disabilities, behavioral health services for children and families, and case management for Oregonian's in need of assistance with meeting basic needs (such as housing or food). But we like many of Oregon's nonprofits are struggling to provide the critical services Oregonians rely on. **We need more financial support from the State to attract and retain staff.**

Over 60% of our clients are on the Oregon Health Plan, and greater than 30% live in a rural area of the state. We provide vital services to children and families in need, many of whom would have no other option within a reasonable driving distance if we closed our doors. Imagine driving your non-verbal child with autism an hour each way in order to participate in weekly therapies that help them learn tools for communication. Or if you couldn't access the feeding therapy needed for an toddler who was struggling to grow and develop as expected. We have clinics in Jackson, Yamhill, Clackamas, Washington, and Multnomah counties, and families across Oregon depend on us to help ensure that their children thrive.

To all of our disadvantage, nonprofits face a daunting barrier to fulfilling their essential role on behalf of the state. Nonprofits cannot exist without nonprofit employees, and nonprofit employees have an incredibly high rate of burnout and turnover. To manage the heavy financial burden of keeping our doors open in this economy, our therapists have had to continue to add clients to their caseload, however this is an unsustainable and short-sighted solution to the broader funding situation. We need your help to take the pressure off of our providers and allow us to maintain a healthy and thriving workforce who will serve generations of Oregonians in the years to come.

The need to invest in the sector is now. Investment this year will improve our ability to recruit and retain staff into the future and for the pressing priorities that have been put forward by the Governor.

By supporting Oregon's nonprofits, you support the well-being of Oregonians. I urge you to support Oregon's nonprofits by reforming State contracting practices and funding nonprofit staff retention.

Thank you for your consideration,



Amanda Watters
Executive Director
Neurotherapeutic Pediatric Therapies, Inc