

2/11/25

Chair Hartman, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services,

For the record, my name is Anthonette Guy, Region 6 Board of Director for SEIU Local 858 and a current I/DD Level 2B Adult Foster Care Provider. I am submitting my testimony in support of the House Bill 2560 but recommend that the House Bill 2560 includes all three licensing types (APD, Developmental Disabilities & Oregon Health Authority Mental Health Homes). Currently, Bill 2560 excludes DD AFH and OHA AFH. I agree APD AFH requires an updated payment structure that will address inequities in pay with the current pay rates, assessments and methodologies used. I disagree that Mental Health AFH and DD AFH will not be included in addressing the same inequities. All licensing types (APD, OHA & DD) require restructuring of rate methodologies. Excluding any licensing type could and would negatively impact community-based DD and OHA AFH providers financially.

Secondly, I would like to stress the importance of exceptional pay rates. The individuals requiring care in AFH are not one size fit all. Some require complex and advanced skill sets to care for these individuals safely. Which equates to increased hours, increased resources and increased financial responsibilities for AFH providers. Providers should be included in any decision related to establishing a new pay structure. AFH providers are experts in their homes. AFH providers know and understand what support is required to provide safe, consistent and compassionate care to individuals in our home. AFH can provide consistent care with minimal staff changes, increased interaction, less disruption of our individuals schedules, increased advocacy, skill set pairing, stability and has a unique understanding of our individual's needs. I honestly believe that our individuals thrive more physically and mentally in AFH settings rather than other community-based settings like group homes and care facilities. AFH providers have chosen to care for individuals in their home 24/7 to offer a home-like care environment while offering the state a cost-effective alternative to other high-priced community-based care settings. AFH provides the same level of care as other community-based programs but historically paid less. Historically, AFH (all levels) has been excluded one way or another from governmental funding increases, which is essential for operating our homes as operating costs have risen astronomically. The Individuals in our AFH have become an integral part of our family.

AFH Provider business costs increase yearly, but AFH often receive minimal compensation to provide care to our individuals. Often less than minimum wage based upon the hours it takes to care for individuals in our home. We provide 24/7 care without sick days and vacations at times. Without changes to our rate methodology (across licensing types), we struggle to remain competitive in a complex market, even though the home-like environment we offer is unmatched anywhere else on the CBC spectrum.

In summary, current outdated and inaccurate assessment models and low reimbursement rates have caused significant financial strains and challenges for all Adult Foster Homes in Oregon, including DD and MH homes. It would be my recommendation and plea to include all three AFH licensing types for payment restructuring. I agree restructuring is required, but without penalty and financial harm to any AFH provider. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully,

Anthonette Guy