

March 27, 2025

Chair Hartman, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and members of the committee:

I have worked at Shangri-La, a nonprofit human services organization serving adults with disabilities and families with disadvantages, for the past 15 years. In that time, I have experienced many legislative sessions, and it seems things are stuck on repeat.

The ask from provider agencies, like Shangri-La, who provide essential support to people with disabilities and are critical in preventing the worsening of homelessness and community challenges associated with behavioral health conditions, is always the same plea: help us stay above water or help us catch up to baseline. For example, a recent ODHS study showed a \$558 million dollar gap between what providers are currently paid and what they need to sustain services.

It is sickening to think of the astronomical cost of the time spent, by providers and legislators, over the last 15 years (and probably longer) on the topic of funding support for individuals with I/DD – only again to end up in the same spot: underfunded.

Let's get unstuck. It is time for a COLA.

The absolute best thing you can do for providers of I/DD services is add an annual cost of living adjustment to the rate model of no less than the Consumer Price Index. A COLA is the leverage priority, the ONE thing, that will result in the greatest impact and will infinitely change I/DD funding conversations to a more forward-focused place of quality, enrichment, and empowerment rather than survival.

Additionally, HB 2150 will give providers a one-time immediate increase so that they can pass this on to DSPs, take care of the homes people with I/DD live in, and add back positions which have been eliminated due to underfunding.

Please support HB 2150 with the -1 amendment.

In fellowship for a better Oregon for all,

Ashley Erb

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