

To: Chairs Valderrama & Campos, and Members of the Committee
From: Jenny Cavarano
Re: Testimony in Support of Regional Family Networks—Specifically CODSN
Date: Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Regional Family Networks Change Lives—And Save Oregon Money

I am writing in strong support of Oregon’s Regional Family Networks and to highlight the life-changing impact of the **Central Oregon Disability Support Network (CODSN)**, which serves Crook, Deschutes, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Lake, Klamath, and Wheeler counties.

CODSN is a trusted, **family-led** organization that supports individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families across Central and Eastern Oregon. From the Warm Springs Reservation to remote Harney County, CODSN ensures families receive not only information but also genuine connection, advocacy, and culturally responsive support.

In the 2023–2024 year alone, CODSN:

- Provided **resources and support to 3,655 families**
- Reached **16,257 attendees** through **228 trainings and events**
- Activated **109 community partners** to improve access and inclusion

In communities where families face deep systemic barriers—fragmented services, inaccessible education, and gaps in youth mental health—CODSN steps in to:

- Offer **culturally and linguistically relevant support**, including multiple Spanish-language groups
- Build inclusive, accessible spaces through **sensory-friendly movie nights, resource fairs**, and emergency preparedness events
- Provide **disability awareness education** to schools, healthcare providers, and local governments
- Deliver **family-driven advocacy** in over **150 statewide and regional committee meetings**

Regional Family Networks like CODSN create lasting change. They improve outcomes, reduce family isolation, and help Oregon save money by preventing crises and reducing system strain. These networks are smart investments and critical supports for thousands of Oregon families.

We urge you to continue and expand funding for Oregon’s Regional Family Networks. Our communities need them now more than ever.

How Family Networks Have Impacted My Family

Jenny Cavarno

Clackamas, Oregon

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Good afternoon, Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Nosse, and the committee members.

My name is Jenny Cavarno. I am from Wilsonville, Oregon, in Clackamas County.

My eldest son, Christian, experiences a developmental disability. Our family has personal experience with being part of our local Family to Family Network.

Before we were a part of a Family to Family Network, we spent many of Christian's younger years in isolation and were stuck in the "disability world". This means that our family spent all of our time navigating systems that included medical, therapeutic, educational, and human services, and we were unable to see Christian's future or help him to dream big dreams and figure out what he wanted for his future.

At 14 months old, when Christian received his rare chromosome developmental disability diagnosis, we were told that most boys like Christian were in institutions and that we should take him home, love him, and hope for the best.

Fast forward to today! Christian graduated high school with an extended diploma, he spent three years in his local school district transition program where he developed life skills and work skills. Christian left transition services with a part-time job working at a local car dealership. With the money that Christian earned there, he saved enough money to fulfill his dream of going on a vacation with his family to Hawaii. He has fulfilled that dream. He paid for his airfare, accommodation, and the activities that he wanted to do there. At 23, Christian chose to move out of our family home and into an Adult Foster care facility close to us. Christian was employed part-time for the last 4 years by Levey Restaurants Inc. He was working at the Portland Moda Center and Providence Park, where he thrived. Currently, he is unemployed but is engaged in employment services as he is looking for another job. He lives in a home with three roommates his age, and he is happy and content.

I am sharing Christian's story with you because I feel that without Family to Family Networks, our family would not have had the vision for Christian. We would not have understood how to support him in areas of self-determination, teach him self-advocacy skills, or support him as he made important life decisions that were person-centered. As with all my children, Christian has the exact wants and desires of all adults his age. We are extremely grateful that the Family to Family Networks were able to bring us out of that isolated disability world that we were swirling in. Our family's life is better for it, Christian's life is better for it as we were able to support and encourage Christian to be the best he can be.

I am urging you to continue and expand funding for Oregon's Regional Family Networks.

Jenny Cavarno, Parent