

To: Chairs Valderrama & Campos, and Members of the Committee

From: Mia Swanson, Bend, OR

Re: Testimony in Support of Regional Family Networks—Specifically CODSN

Date: 4/2/2025

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)—the Regional Family Network serving Crook, Deschutes, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Lake, Klamath, and Wheeler counties.

CODSN is a trusted, family-led organization supporting 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 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 crisis 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 CODSN Has Impacted Me / My Family:

I had been in the field of disabilities for over 18 years prior to my youngest son receiving a diagnosis of a global developmental delay. Even with all of my professional knowledge, I was personally at a loss of what to do and how to navigate his journey. CODSN was instrumental from the beginning. They helped me understand how to find a speech and language pathologist. Facilitated a parent support group at his early learning center. And, when the time came for his transition to kindergarten, they supported me as part of a group, and individually in how to advocate for and navigate his IEP services.

My son has since outgrown his delay, and made enough progress to no longer need his IEP. However, if he still needed these supports and services, as a parent, it would have been invaluable to me to know that I would have had the backing and expertise of the compassionate and invested people at CODSN our local family network. Parents of children with disabilities face unique challenges in being effective advocates for their children’s needs. The education and advocacy I received made all the difference in helping my son overcome the gaps, and rise to his potential. Every parent should be supported so they can see their child reach their own unique potential. Family networks provide the support for families and children to thrive and see what is possible.

Mia Swanson, Bend, OR