

April 3rd, 2025

Co-Chair Campos, Co-Chair Valderrama, and members of the Subcommittee,

Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Natazha Howard, and I serve on the Executive Management Team at Partnerships in Community Living. We support people who experience life with an intellectual and/or developmental disability.

One of the vital parts of Oregon's support system is the Community Developmental Disability Programs, the CDDPs. These case managers are the connectors. They help people navigate services like housing, medical care, employment, and transportation. In moments of crisis, they're often the first and only call a person can make.

CDDPs are also a crucial check and balance in our system, ensuring that services are person-centered, ethical, and aligned with what each person truly wants and needs.

Supporting people in having true choice and a life in which they are making their own choices also means standing by them through the consequences—both good and bad. This is one example of where the collaboration and partnership with CDDP is critical and why sustainability is imperative. A few years ago, we supported a woman who was facing eviction and about to lose access to her life sustaining medical care. We were helping her move her belongings into storage, preparing for a shelter stay. But the CDDP didn't give up. They rearranged their week, showed up, and found a provider to meet her needs immediately. Their presence reminded her that she mattered. Today, three years later, she is not just safe and healthy. She's thriving.

But this level of commitment isn't sustainable without proper support. CDDPs have been operating at just 86% of full funding. House Bill 5526 can change that by fully funding this essential part of Oregon's I/DD system.

I respectfully urge your support. When we invest in CDDPs, we invest in people's safety, well-being, and futures.

Sincerely,

Natazha Howard

Executive Officer of Life Services and Operations, PCL