



Full Access High Desert

Located at the Beth Rixe Service Center

Providing Support Services for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

4/3/25

To: Chair Campos, Chair Valderrama, Joint Committee Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

From: Heather Hopkins-Slechta, Executive Director, Full Access High Desert

Re: Support for IDD Case Management Funding in the SB 5526 Oregon Department of Human Services Budget Bill

Chair Campos, Chair Valderrama, and members of the committee,

My name is Heather Hopkins-Slechta, and I am the Executive Director of Full Access High Desert. We provide case management services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in their own or family homes in Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, and Lake counties and are one of the 14 Support Service Brokerages across Oregon.

I have been involved with the Brokerage system since 2002. Over that time, we have seen a positive increase in resources and supports for the individuals we serve, but with this there has also come an increase in caseloads, paperwork, systems, and rules. Case Managers historically had more “people time”, where in which relationships could be built, have a stronger focus on person centered planning, and really working to support individuals’ goals and dreams. Now, Case Management has become more “paperwork time” to ensure supports are coordinated, deliverable, and in compliance.

Case Management is very complex and individuals in services depend on Brokerage staff to assist in navigating a complicated system to find resources and supports needed for daily living needs, employment, housing, medical and mental health care, community involvement, access to Medicaid, and emergency preparedness planning for wildfires, inclement weather, and power outages.

We try to ensure our staff live in the same communities as the people we serve. This community connection is beneficial due to the knowledge of local resources. To do this, we need to ensure we can pay our 400 staff statewide a living wage. This would allow us to hire and maintain quality case managers who are able to build and maintain relationships with the individuals we serve.

The cost of living continues to increase, but the percentage that Brokerages and CDDPs are funded to provide services has remained largely the same over the past few biennia. On behalf of the 14 Support Service Brokerages, we ask you to commit additional funding to I/DD Case Management services, to protect and strengthen these agencies that mean so much to the nearly 8,000 adult Oregonians who receive services from Support Services Brokerages.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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