

To: Chairs Valderrama & Campos, and Members of the Committee
From: Caela McKeever & The McKeever Family
Re: Testimony in Support of Regional Family Networks—Specifically CODSN
Date: 4/4/2025

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 My Family:

My 7-year-old son has a rare neuromuscular genetic disorder that affects every part of his life. After admitting him to the emergency room at eight weeks old, we were told that all diagnostic tests were inconclusive and that we should take him home to potentially watch him die. Seven

years later, he is thriving as a disabled kiddo. Our family would not have survived intact and my son would not have the wonderful quality of life he has if it had not been for our support community, including CODSN.

When we moved to Bend three years ago, our medical and support network started anew. CODSN was the first organization to take us under their wing, orienting us to the Central Oregon pediatric medical system, helping us find support and aid programs, connecting us to other rare and undiagnosed disability families, providing social connection for my 10-year-old daughter, and connecting my husband and I to mental health support services that are critical for disability parents. Helping us navigate complicated and muddled services and insurance bureaucracy not only made it possible for my son to receive the services that improved his quality of life while maintaining our family's financial solvency, but the simple act of walking alongside us as allies reinforced that we are not alone – a feeling most families with disability can't escape.

As a tight-knit community with a wide net across Central and Eastern Oregon, CODSN is one of the few organizations that connect disability families across our region, including families in rural areas who would otherwise have no access to supports. I advocate on behalf of my family and all families with disabilities in their lives who deserve support, community, and dignity.

Learn more at: www.codsn.org