



April 18, 2025

Chairs Sanchez and Lieber, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Anna Keenan-Mudrick. I'm a Parent, Sister and Auntie of an amazing handful of Oregonians who experience Autism. I came into this field, 32 years ago, with personal passion for the work, starting as a Direct Support Professional (DSP), and incrementally working my way up the chain to Executive Director.

I am here today representing the 51 members of Community Providers Association of Oregon (CPAO) and the 36-year-old nonprofit that I'm honored to be a part of, Community Access Services (CAS). We are all mission-driven to protect and serve Oregonians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

As you build the ODDS portion of the DHS budget, we implore you to invest in our incredible workforce by equipping us with a direly needed funding increase to help mitigate the hugely substantial difference between our currently funded 2018 rate model and the newly updated, legislatively directed 2024 rate study, that demonstrates a dangerous and growing funding-chasm of \$558 million.


We cannot ongoingly scrape by in our support of Oregonians with IDD. What we are paid now assumes an average DSP rate of \$18.77 an hour. This is not realistic today, and provider agencies overall are instead paying an average of \$2.50 an hour above this. Community Access Services, pays an average DSP wage over \$4 an hour more than our rate model assumes. We do this by being "creative and scrappy," but this survivalism approach is only sustainable for so long. More and more, Community Access Services has inquiries from peer agencies seeking help, as they struggle to survive. They are no longer at the point of being able to scrape by. They are at the end of their rope. The problem is growing, and it scares me more and more the further we go without increases. It puts thousands of Oregonians with IDD at tremendous risk of losing their vital services, supports and housing.

The bottom line is that **our economy has changed since 2018**, and our incredible, diverse, versatile, amazing yet grossly underappreciated and historically marginalized workforce needs and deserves nothing less than a fair, professional, equitable rate of pay for the varied, complex, and vital work that they do, every day. **Without doing right by our DSPs, we put at risk the survival of our individualized, responsive, organically grown system of support, which then puts at further risk the health, safety and happiness of Oregonians with Developmental Disabilities.**

But the really good news is that, here in Oregon, we have a robust economy! We have a caring and conscientious legislature! And we have the carefully, collaboratively, professionally designed vehicle that you directed ODDS to build, to inform our next steps: a New Rate Study. We can do this, together. **Our historically marginalized, determined workforce deserves as much, and Oregonians with IDD, also historically grossly marginalized, deserve continuity, familiarity, trust.**

Please champion any level of IDD Provider Agency rate increase possible, to invest in equity for our workforce and in the safety and stability of our impassioned, complex support system for Oregonians with IDD, today.

In Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Keenan-Mudrick".

Anna Keenan-Mudrick, MSW

Executive Director of Community Access Services

Legislative Chair for Community Providers Association of Oregon