



Mission: To build and serve a  
community of great  
providers.

# Board Report

March 25, 2026



# OPRA's Guiding Principles

**Anchor Statement:** Ohio's providers are focused on supporting the success of the people we support.

**Principle #1:** Providers must be trusted to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and run effective businesses.

**Principle #2:** Providers must receive sufficient funding to deliver services that meet the needs of people they support in an ever-evolving society.

**Principle #3:** All services across the spectrum must be recognized as valuable and vital to every person we support.

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### **Safe Place Statement**

We would like to thank you for attending this meeting. This meeting, like all of the OPRA Committee meetings, are designed to offer a safe place for OPRA Members to share thoughts, opinions and ideas. The OPRA Team and the OPRA Board relies on these discussions to inform our efforts to provide Advocacy, Information and Resources. We are respectfully asking you, as a participant, to assist us to make this a safe place for professionals to openly share without fear. It is important that when personal experiences are shared, there is an assurance that what is shared stays within this group. We are looking forward to an open and honest conversation and we would like to thank you for being a part of this important meeting.



**OPRA Board of Directors Meeting Agenda**  
**March 25, 2026**  
**10:00am – 1:00pm**

1. **Welcome & Safe Place Statement**
  - Review of Safe Place Statement
2. **Approval of Agenda**
  - Review and approve today's meeting agenda (any additions and/or deletions)
3. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
  - Review and approve minutes from the January & February meetings
4. **Finance Report**
  - Financial Statements Review and Approval
5. **Board Updates**
  - Board Members
    - Empty Seat
    - At Large Members
  - Governance Committee
    - Liz Owens
    - Ashley Brocious
    - Felicia Hall
    - Lisa Reed
    - Jamie Steele
6. **Board Report**
  - Legislation
  - Modernization
7. **CEO Report**
  - State of the OPRA building
  - Retirement Plan
  - Membership Update
  - Conference and Board Retreat Update
  - Member Renewal Update
  - The Good Stuff (Trainings, Partnerships, Networks, etc.)
8. **Other Business**
9. **Lunch (11am)**
10. **Ohio University Voinovich School Focus Group Discussions (11:30am)**



## Board of Directors Minutes

Date: January 28, 2026

Time: 10:00 – 12:00

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

### Board Members:

Present			Absent
District 1	District 4	District 7	Dennis Grant
Jamie Steele	Roy Cherry	Tami Honkala	Jeff Johnson
Jim Steffey	Steve King	Nikki Jarras	Tim Menke
Felicia Hall		Laura Lamb	
District 2	District 5	At-Large	
Scott DeLong	Steve Colecchi	Kurt Miller	
Ashley Brocious	Michelle Madden	Chris Wolf	
District 3	District 6		
Lisa Reed	Adam Guinther		
Tim Neville	Bob Heinzerling		
Mary Thompson-Hufford	Liz Owens-Detillion		

**OPRA Staff:** Pete Moore, Scott Marks, Teresa Kobelt, Christine Touvelle, Rachel Hayes, Melissa Fannon, Sonya Summers

**Guests:** None

**Minutes\*:**

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
<i>Welcome &amp; Safe Place Statement</i>	Adam Guinther welcomed Board members. Safe place statement was read.		
<i>Approval of Agenda</i>	The board reviewed and approved the meeting agenda  <b>Motion to approve:</b> Lisa Reed; <b>Second:</b> Michelle Madden	Agenda approved unanimously.	
<i>Approval of Previous Minutes</i>	Board reviewed and approved minutes from December 2025 board meeting.  <b>Motion to approve:</b> Jim Steffey; <b>Second:</b> Tim Neville	Minutes approved unanimously.	
<i>Finance Report</i>	Liz Owens-Detillion presented the finance report, highlighting the organization's financial performance for the year, including increased checking account balances, higher investments, and a net operating income that exceeded budget.  <b>Motion to approve December Financials:</b> Roy Cherry; <b>Second:</b> Michelle Madden.	December financials approved unanimously.	
<i>Board Report</i>	Pete provided legislative and policy updates related to modernization of Ohio's developmental disabilities (DD) system and county board financial sustainability. Legislators expressed support for addressing a projected \$700 million funding gap over the next five years. Pete introduced the proposed 'Securing the Future' legislation focused on county board financial reform. Ongoing discussions continue with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) and the Budget Coalition.	The OPRA team will continue legislative engagement and data preparation related to modernization, county board reform and DSP wage discussions.	OPRA Team

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>The Board discussed concerns surrounding the statewide DSP wage survey and discussed strategies to defend against misinformation from county boards. Board members discussed the need to educate providers about accurately completing the wage verification survey and to coordinate with DODD on how the results are communicated.</p> <p>The Board discussed financial pressures facing provider agencies, particularly related to the \$19 per hour DSP wage target. Pete emphasized the importance of focusing on direct service costs rather than administrative overhead when evaluating provider sustainability.</p> <p>The Board also discussed financial pressures associated with Medicaid waiver programs and the sustainability challenges facing counties. Additional discussion addressed broader DD system modernization efforts including potential alternatives to county board case management, regionalization discussions, administrative consolidation, and opportunities to improve efficiency through technology and data systems.</p> <p>Concerns regarding the proposed professional registry system were discussed, including potential duplication of existing compliance systems and implementation risks.</p> <p>Pete also provided updates on a proposed state financial liability protection bill and outreach to gubernatorial candidates regarding DD system reform.</p>		
<p><i>CEO Report</i></p>	<p>Teresa provided updates on potential partnerships and pilot initiatives, including a possible collaboration with Ohio University's Voinovich School to support system planning and readiness reviews.</p> <p>Scott presented a retirement plan proposal involving Transamerica and Oppenheimer structured as a pooled</p>	<p>The OPRA team will continue evaluating partnership opportunities and upcoming initiatives including the provider summit, membership engagement activities, and retirement plan proposal.</p>	<p>OPRA Team</p>

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>employer plan designed to reduce administrative burden and provide cost savings for participating members.</p> <p>Pete announced plans to partner with Consulting for Human Services to support quality navigation within regional hubs, building on the previous year's work with Mary Lou Bourne.</p> <p>Melissa provided updates regarding the upcoming Great Provider Summit in Cleveland, including hotel arrangements and sponsorship activity.</p> <p>The Board reviewed membership renewal numbers, which remain strong, including eight new members. Plans are underway for a February membership drive and regional meetings scheduled for March.</p>		
<i>Open Discussion</i>	<p>Board members discussed rumors that OCA may be stepping back from the DD system due to leadership changes. These reports remain unconfirmed.</p>		
<i>Adjourn</i>	<i>Motion to adjourn: Liz Owens-Detillion</i>	Unanimously approved	

\* More detailed information available upon request



# Board of Directors Minutes

Date: February 25, 2026

Time: 10:00 – 12:00

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

**Board Members:**

Present			Absent
District 1	District 4	District 7	Roy Cherry
Jamie Steele	Tim Menke	Tami Honkala	Nikki Jarras
Jim Steffey	Steve King	Laura Lamb	
Felicia Hall			
District 2	District 5	At-Large	
Scott DeLong	Steve Colecchi	Kurt Miller	
Ashley Brocius	Michelle Madden	Chris Wolf	
Dennis Grant	Jeff Johnson		
District 3	District 6		
Lisa Reed	Adam Guinther		
Tim Neville	Bob Heinzerling		
	Liz Owens-Detillion		

**OPRA Staff:** Pete Moore, Scott Marks, Teresa Kobelt, Christine Touvelle, Rachel Hayes, Melissa Fannon, Sonya Summers

**Guests:** None



**Minutes\*:**

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
<i>Welcome &amp; Safe Place Statement</i>	Adam Guinther welcomed Board members. Safe place statement was read.		
<i>Approval of Agenda</i>	<p>The board reviewed and approved the meeting agenda</p> <p><b>Motion to approve:</b> Tami Honkala; <b>Second:</b> Michelle Madden</p>	Agenda approved unanimously.	
<i>Board Report</i>	<p>Pete and Teresa provided an update on discussions regarding county board financial sustainability and system modernization. Many county boards are projected to face financial insolvency within four years, creating an estimated \$700 million funding gap. A legislative proposal addressing funding sustainability and structural reforms, including regionalization and restructuring options, was presented.</p> <p>Data from Clay Widener identifying counties at financial risk and potential state exposure were reviewed. The Board discussed the need for counties to consider alternative operating models and partnerships. The Board also discussed regionalization as a potential strategy for achieving cost efficiencies.</p> <p>The meeting focused on the financial challenges faced by county boards, including their discussions of reducing funding for developmental disability services by 71%.</p> <p>Pete discussed upcoming priorities for DODD, including addressing county board financial issues, reviewing provider certification requirements and setting sizes in the development rule.</p>	OPRA will continue engaging policymakers and stakeholders regarding county board financial sustainability and modernization strategies.	OPRA Team

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>The discussion also led to potential legislation establishing risk-based monitoring systems and a Direct Support Professional (DSP) registry. Feedback was mixed regarding whether participation in a registry should be mandatory.</p> <p>Pete discussed potential changes to mandatory provider training systems. Members agreed that any statewide training requirements should allow providers to implement additional training beyond minimum standards.</p> <p>The discussion also addressed potential legislative actions, including a statewide needs assessment to improve data collection tools and the possibility of selective contracting.</p> <p>Pete reported that DODD leadership has been receptive to several of OPRA’s policy ideas.</p> <p>Pete also discussed his meeting with Scott Bartica about a proposal to achieve \$700 million in Medicaid savings with the understanding that legislative protections would be necessary to ensure the savings benefit DD services.</p> <p>Christine and Scott provided an update on House Bill 225, which would eliminate the use of 14(c) certificates. The bill has experienced sponsor changes and amendments introduced without prior consultation. An interested parties meeting was held to discuss potential amendments and next steps.</p> <p>Christine introduced House Bill 530, a bipartisan bill establishing a Long-Term Care Workforce Study Commission, sponsored by Representatives Brewer and Salvo. She noted the bill's connection to the Ability Center in Toledo and expressed concerns about the composition of the study committee, which may exclude key policy groups. While the</p>	<p>OPRA will continue tracking 14(c) and engage in future policy discussions related to workforce planning.</p>	<p>Christine/Scott</p>

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>proposal may not advance during the current legislative session, members anticipate that the concept may return to a future General Assembly.</p> <p>Scott Marks discussed the future direction of day and employment services following DODD's decision to discontinue the group employment initiative. He emphasized the need to establish a new vision for employment services and advocating within the broader spectrum of Medicaid funding and aligning them with outcomes such as independence and reduced reliance on other services. He invited feedback and mentioned upcoming discussions in the Policy Committee and Employment Services Committee.</p> <p>Teresa discussed concerns regarding the implementation of the Needs Rating Instrument (NRI) and the need for appropriate legal and policy changes before implementation proceeds.</p> <p>The OPRA will continue monitoring the NRI implementation process and provide feedback as appropriate.</p>	<p>OPRA will continue strategic discussions regarding the future of employment services.</p>	<p>Scott/OPRA Team</p>
<p><i>CEO Report</i></p>	<p>Pete reported that 120 members renewed their membership, and 13 new members joined OPRA.</p> <p>Melissa reported that registration for the upcoming Great Provider Summit will open on March 1.</p> <p>Pete discussed political engagement activities, including meetings with Austin Fairbanks, Policy Advisor from the Ramaswamy campaign and discussions regarding potential leadership candidates and policy priorities for the DD system.</p>		

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>Pete discussed the upcoming District/Regional meetings for providers to come together to discuss the state of the DD system. Board members were encouraged to bring a non-member friend.</p> <p>The Board discussed plans for next month's in-person board meeting, which will include focus group discussions with Ohio University's Voinovich School.</p>		
<i>Open Discussion</i>	A question was raised regarding the status of the OPRA office and the ability to hold future Board meetings.		
<i>Adjourn</i>	<p><i>Motion to adjourn: Michelle Madden</i></p> <p><i>Second: Felicia Hall</i></p>	Unanimously approved	

\* More detailed information available upon request

# Policy Committee

The policy committee serves as the clearinghouse for most issues affecting any aspect of DD services and makes recommendations for action to OPRA's board of directors. Every effort is made to allow sufficient time to discuss issues in detail in order to understand the impact on individuals and providers, and to consider what position OPRA should take on a given issue. OPRA Committees examine issues and may pass them on to the Policy Committee for review. Ad hoc workgroups may also be established from time to time to examine issues more fully. The policy committee is chaired by the vice chair of the board of directors with a representative provider group selected to serve as the core committee. This core committee is tasked with convening and commenting on policy issues as they arise, whether during a meeting or between meetings. Other committee workflows through policy committee to the board of directors, and vice versa.

## Quarterly Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 26, 2026

12:00pm – 2:00pm (Virtual Meeting)

### Opening & Context

The primary focus of the meeting was the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities' current work in the waiver space, including implementation of the new interRAI assessment tool, upcoming rule changes, proposed changes to employment-related services, acuity-based rates, and the Department's DSP compensation survey. The conversation reflected strong interest in understanding both the policy direction and the operational implications of these changes for providers, individuals receiving services, and the broader system.

### Discussion

#### 1. DODD Waiver Updates and interRAI Implementation

A significant portion of the meeting focused on DODD's planned implementation of the new interRAI assessment tool and its phased replacement of the DDP in certain settings. Teresa shared updates on the Department's current timeline and approach, including that the initial rollout would focus on MRC sites and involve a cohort of trained assessors beginning in April.

Committee members raised a number of concerns about implementation, including:

- Whether there will be sufficient assessor capacity to complete assessments and handle manual reviews in a timely manner
- How assessors will be trained, monitored, and calibrated to ensure consistency across the state
- The lack of transparency regarding how the new assessment results may affect service authorizations, utilization patterns, and billing rates
- Whether providers will be informed when notices or communications are sent to individuals and families about the assessment process

Teresa shared that DODD's stated rationale for moving away from the DDP relates in part to longstanding concerns from families, particularly around the perception that the current tool underestimates support needs for individuals living at home. At the same time, members expressed concern that the shift could create significant unintended consequences if not paired with transparency, side-by-side comparisons, and clear operational guidance.

The group emphasized the importance of ongoing provider feedback as implementation begins, especially if there are noticeable drops in service levels, delays in authorization, or inconsistencies among assessors.

## **2. Assessment Process, Training, and Operational Readiness**

The committee explored the mechanics of the assessment process in more detail, including questions about the total number of assessors, how training will occur, and what oversight mechanisms will be used to ensure quality and consistency.

Members noted that changes of this scale can create major downstream effects if operational details are not worked out in advance. There was particular concern about:

- Immediate decision-making if an assessment results in a lower level of support
- Whether there is adequate infrastructure to address disputes, corrections, or urgent service issues
- The risk of confusion for providers if they are not included in communications going out to families and individuals

Pete underscored the importance of continuing to surface real operational concerns as the system rolls out, rather than waiting until problems are widespread.

## **3. Rule Changes and Related Waiver Work**

The committee also reviewed several additional DODD rule and waiver items expected in the coming months. Teresa shared updates related to July rule changes, including issues involving provider of record decisions and alignment of vehicle modification language with ODM requirements.

There was also discussion of broader waiver-related projects and tools, including the vendor associated with the assessment tool and related training resources. Teresa clarified that the conversation around MRC and acuity-based rates is not about replacing MRC with EVV, but rather about alternative structures, simplification, and payment methodology.

Committee members reiterated the importance of continued review of these proposals not only from a policy standpoint, but also through the lens of day-to-day provider operations.

## **4. Employment Services Rules: BEST and Group Employment Supports**

Scott Marks led discussion on two current proposed rules affecting employment services: Basic Employment Skills Training (BEST) and Group Employment Supports (GES).

The group reviewed the latest development that CMS will not approve the proposed tiered structure for BEST, which effectively removes the Department's previous grandfathering approach for long-term recipients. This leaves the proposed removal of the community integration component as one of the most significant remaining changes in the BEST rule.

Committee members expressed strong concern about this direction. Discussion focused on the strategic question of whether to:

- Strongly oppose the BEST rule as drafted, even if doing so may complicate or delay progress on group employment rates, or
- Support progress on GES while continuing to challenge the BEST proposal, particularly the loss of community integration supports

The group discussed the possibility that the waiver amendment could present these issues as though providers must choose between preserving community integration and advancing improved group employment rates. Teresa clarified that the rules are technically separate, but acknowledged concern that they may still be framed in a way that creates a false choice.

Overall, the committee leaned toward prioritizing preservation of the community integration rate within the pre-vocational service structure, even if that means delaying the enhanced small-group employment rate.

### **5. Acuity-Based Rates and MRC Payment Structure**

The committee also spent time discussing DODD's ongoing work on acuity-based rates for MRC sites. Teresa outlined several of the Department's stated goals, including more predictable payments, reduced cross-subsidization, and simplified billing.

Despite those stated goals, members raised substantial concerns about the structure being discussed. Key concerns included:

- The complexity of the proposed model
- Assumptions about staffing ratios and support needs within a home
- The potential for restrictive practices if payment structures become too rigid
- Questions about how on-behalf services would be handled
- Whether the system may unintentionally reduce flexibility or understate actual provider costs

Several participants questioned whether the proposed approach truly simplifies billing in practice, or whether it simply shifts complexity into a different form. There was also concern that effective stewardship of public dollars should not be equated with imposing tighter restrictions that undermine individualized supports.

The group agreed that more provider feedback is needed as the Department continues shaping this work.

### **6. DODD Compensation Survey**

The committee reviewed concerns related to DODD's DSP compensation survey, with discussion focusing on inconsistencies in how wages and compensation are being reported and interpreted.

Members raised questions about:

- How starting wages versus average wages are being defined
- Whether bonuses are being reported consistently
- Whether on-site or on-call pay practices are affecting calculated averages
- Whether providers have clear instructions for entering data and correcting mistakes
- How the Department's methodology compares to National Core Indicators and other national datasets

There was broad agreement that the survey, as currently understood, may not produce a clear or accurate picture of DSP compensation without more precise definitions and better instructions. Members emphasized that these data matter because they may influence future rate discussions, workforce policy, and public narratives about provider wages.

The committee encouraged OPRA to continue pushing for greater clarity, a better template, and more consistent reporting expectations before the next survey cycle.

### **Next Steps**

- Teresa will ask DODD for more detail on the training, monitoring, and consistency process for interRAI assessors.
- Teresa will advocate for providers to be informed when interRAI notices or communications go out to individuals and families.
- Teresa will raise concerns with DODD about the need for transparency, including side-by-side comparisons of service and budget impacts associated with interRAI implementation.
- Teresa will follow up with DODD regarding the compensation survey template, reporting instructions, and the ability to correct data entry errors.
- OPRA will continue gathering operational feedback from members regarding interRAI rollout, acuity-based rates, rule changes, and impacts on service levels and budgets.

- OPRA will continue polling and discussing member priorities related to community integration rates, small group employment rates, and associated advocacy strategy.
- Teresa and OPRA will explore whether the therapeutic leave day process could more closely mirror the ICF model, including prior authorization for additional days when needed.
- Teresa and OPRA will continue reviewing the compensation survey methodology and compare it to national data sources and labor definitions where helpful.
- Members were encouraged to continue sharing feedback with OPRA in the coming days and weeks, particularly on the BEST and GES proposals and acuity-related concerns.

**Core Policy Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, February 23, 2026**  
**12:00pm – 2:00pm (Virtual Meeting)**

### **Opening & Context**

The meeting opened with discussion focused on several major policy and system design issues currently facing Ohio's developmental disabilities system. The primary topics included DODD's proposed acuity-based rate and reimbursement model, the future of day and employment services, the role and sustainability of small providers, potential changes to provider certification, and the growing need for contingency planning related to county board financial instability and the possible future expansion of managed care.

Throughout the meeting, members emphasized the importance of moving beyond reactive responses to Department proposals and instead using this moment to shape a clearer, more intentional vision for the future of the provider system.

### **Discussion**

#### **1. DODD Acuity-Based Rates and Reimbursement Model**

A significant portion of the meeting focused on DODD's proposed acuity-based rate and reimbursement structure. Committee members expressed broad concern that the current proposal appears more complicated than the existing system and may not achieve the stated goal of simplification.

Discussion reflected several core concerns, including:

- The lack of real-world data or scenario testing to show how the model would work in practice
- Questions about whether the proposed structure accurately reflects provider operations and staffing realities in MRC settings
- Concern that the model may create new administrative burdens rather than reducing complexity
- Skepticism about how assumptions are being made in the absence of more complete data

The group discussed whether cost reporting could serve as an alternative or complementary approach, though members also acknowledged the challenges that cost reporting can create if not thoughtfully designed and implemented.

There was general agreement that OPRA should provide clear written feedback to the Department and urge greater transparency, including testing the model against actual provider scenarios before moving further.

#### **2. Future of Day and Employment Services**

Scott Marks framed the current policy moment as an opportunity to reset and better define the vision for day and employment services in Ohio. Rather than continuing to respond to changes one proposal at a time, the group discussed the need for a more proactive strategy that clearly links employment services to broader goals such as independence, better outcomes, and more effective use of system resources.

Discussion included the importance of:

- Articulating the value of employment and day services in a more future-oriented way
- Positioning these services as part of a larger modernization strategy rather than as isolated line items
- Exploring whether budget legislation could be used as a nontraditional vehicle to advance innovation and new service options

Members agreed that OPRA has an opportunity to continue pushing for a stronger, more strategic narrative around these services.

### **3. Small Providers, Lifespan Services, and System Design**

The committee discussed the role of small providers in Ohio's service system, especially agencies serving fewer than 30 people. Members noted that small providers remain an important part of the system, but many face increasing pressures related to compliance, scale, workforce, and long-term sustainability.

The group discussed the importance of understanding what supports or structures small providers may need in order to remain viable and effective in a changing environment. This included possible conversations around:

- Affiliations
- Shared service or hub models
- Technical assistance
- Longer-term positioning within a more modernized provider landscape

There was interest in bringing a group of smaller providers together for more targeted conversations so OPRA can better understand their concerns and help explore workable options.

### **4. Provider Mergers, Acquisitions, and Affiliations**

The committee spent time discussing the realities and challenges associated with provider mergers, acquisitions, and affiliations. Members shared that these transitions are often more complex than they appear, particularly because they involve not only licensing and operational requirements, but also family communication, staff confidence, county board relationships, and continuity of services.

Several themes emerged from the discussion:

- New providers or organizations entering these arrangements need stronger education and credentialing support to avoid costly mistakes
- County boards can sometimes create barriers to mergers or transitions, including through how they interpret free choice of provider requirements
- Communication is critical in order to avoid unnecessary fear among staff and families when organizations affiliate or change structure
- Relationship-building matters just as much as transactional mechanics when providers are exploring partnerships or integration

The group discussed whether OPRA could play a more intentional role in educating members about available pathways and creating opportunities for agencies interested in becoming lead partners or host organizations to share their capabilities with others.

### **5. Provider Certification and Readiness Concerns**

The conversation also touched on possible future changes to the provider certification rule. Members discussed the importance of thinking more carefully about the qualifications and readiness of new providers and leaders entering the system.

There was interest in whether future rule changes could include:

- Different criteria or expectations for DOOs
- Readiness review concepts for new providers
- Better alignment between certification and actual provider capacity to deliver quality services

This conversation connected to broader concerns about quality, oversight, and the system's current tendency to react after problems emerge rather than building stronger front-end readiness.

## **6. Workforce Questions and Use of Younger Staff**

The committee briefly discussed workforce issues related to the use of 16- and 17-year-olds in provider settings. Members noted that the use of younger workers appears limited in practice and expressed concern that assumptions about widespread use may not be grounded in actual data.

The group discussed the possibility of adding questions to the compensation survey or related data collection efforts in order to better understand how often this occurs and how it is being used across providers.

Members emphasized the importance of grounding policy conversations in real provider data rather than anecdote.

## **7. Managed Care, Contingency Planning, and Provider Networks**

A substantial portion of the meeting focused on county board financial sustainability and the possibility that ongoing fiscal strain could accelerate future conversations about managed long-term services and supports.

Pete highlighted the need for contingency planning, particularly as some county boards may struggle to maintain operations due to failed levies or growing match obligations. Members discussed the importance of preparing now for possible future scenarios rather than waiting until changes are imposed.

Discussion included:

- The need to explore alternatives to the current system if county boards cannot continue to meet financial obligations
- The importance of understanding how managed care could be structured in a way that protects providers and individuals receiving services
- The value of learning from provider experiences during MyCare implementation and from models already in use in other sectors

Anthony shared positive feedback about the provider network model used by the Ohio Children's Alliance, noting its potential relevance if Ohio moves toward managed care in long-term services and supports. The group expressed interest in learning more about network development, clinically integrated networks, and how providers might prepare collectively to negotiate rates and set quality expectations in a different delivery system.

There was also discussion of the broader fiscal picture, including concerns about the significant county match gap and uncertainty about whether local levies will be sufficient to stabilize county finances over time.

## **Next Steps**

- OPRA will draft and send written feedback to the Department regarding concerns with the proposed acuity-based rate and reimbursement model, including the need for real-world testing using actual MRC scenarios.
- OPRA will set up a separate conversation with Janet Stephan or other Department leads to provide more detailed feedback on the acuity-based rate workgroup proposals.
- OPRA will invite approximately 45 small providers serving fewer than 30 people to a series of focused conversations about system changes, affiliations, and support needs.
- OPRA will explore organizing a forum for providers interested in serving as lead agencies for affiliations or mergers, with opportunities for other providers to learn more.
- OPRA will begin exploratory conversations and research related to provider networks or clinically integrated networks, including outreach to OCA, Mark Mecum, Jonas Thom, and Vorys.
- OPRA will reach out to MyCare providers to better understand their experience with the transition to managed care and consider inviting them to share with the committee.

- OPRA will consider adding questions to the compensation survey regarding use of 16- and 17-year-old staff in order to gather better data.
- OPRA will participate in or help convene a small group with DODD to discuss possible provider certification rule changes, including readiness review concepts and qualifications for DOOs.
- OPRA will continue educating members and facilitating discussion about mergers, acquisitions, affiliations, and the likely future structure of the provider landscape.
- OPRA will continue to keep committee members informed about managed care, contingency planning, and related developments as new information emerges.

## Membership Update

The current membership roster reflects the following totals, with non-renewals scheduled to be removed from the roster on March 31:

- **196 Provider Members**
  - 160 members renewed their 2026 membership.
  - 13 new members joined.
  - 23 members have not yet renewed
- **29 Public Entity Members**
  - 23 members renewed their 2026 membership.
  - 1 new member joined
  - 5 members have not yet renewed
- **77 Associate Members**
  - 50 members renewed their 2026 membership.
  - 12 new members joined
  - 15 members have not yet renewed

As of today, the renewal and new membership dues activity is summarized as follows:

- **Provider Members**
  - 160 renewals and 13 new members
  - \$1,703,900.75 in dues was invoiced
  - \$1,205,118 in dues was paid
- **Public Entity Members**
  - 23 renewals and 1 new member
  - \$54,000 in dues was invoiced
  - \$51,000 in dues was paid
- **Associate Members**
  - 50 renewals and 12 new members
  - \$25,800 in dues was invoiced
  - \$23,225 in dues was paid



Total dues invoiced for 2026 memberships are approximately **\$1,783,700.75**, with **\$504,356.25** still outstanding, largely due to quarterly and semi-annual billing arrangements.

**OPRA’s Invitation to Greatness Campaign Update:**

Focused outreach communications were distributed to Ohio providers to encourage participation in the March Friday Five Member Calls. The goal is to give non-members the opportunity to listen in and see the OPRA Community in action with the objective of encouraging membership consideration.

**The following non-members requested participation:**

- Adaptive Sport Connection
- Autism Society of Akron
- Blanchard Valley Residential Services
- Blossom Hill
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland
- CLW
- Hamilton Co. Board of DD
- Helping Lives Home Care Agency
- Ieraci Homes
- Joys Helping Hands
- PathLink Ohio
- Self-Reliance, Inc.
- Toward Independence
- Tru Community
- ViaQuest
- Wilson Estate Home Health Care
- Wind Fall Industries
- Wood Co. Board of DD
- Wynn-Reeth

# OPRA Committee Reports



# Day Array

## Summary

This committee provides a platform for information sharing, networking, deliberating, and problem-solving topics and issues unique to leaders in the day array. Topics covered in meetings may include, but are not limited to, updates from the field, national and state trends, policy and rule review, best practices in organizational leadership, operating fiscally sound organizations, and identifying and mitigating organizational risk as relates to the broad array of services and supports, including day programs, active treatment, vocational training, career development, and employment. Policy recommendations from this committee are taken to the policy committee for review and action.

**Committee Chairs:** Chelsea Ashcraft (I Am Boundless) and Paul Soprano (UCP of Greater Cleveland)

**OPRA Staff Lead:** Scott Marks

### OPRA Day Array Committee Report

Thursday, February 5, 2026

9:30am-11:30am

#### Quick recap

The Day Array Committee meeting focused on updates and discussions regarding the Basic Employment Skills Training (BEST) service and related rule changes, as well as other policy developments. Stacy Collins and Kelly Shuck from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) provided updates on staffing changes and ongoing initiatives, including the transition of Kelly to lead the community life engagement team. The committee discussed the challenges and proposed changes to the BEST rule, including the removal of age-based tiers and the introduction of a "place on the path" approach, as well as concerns about the removal of the community integration rate for small group pre-vocational services. The group also addressed the implications of these changes for providers and individuals receiving services, with input from various committee members on potential impacts and solutions. Additionally, updates were shared on federal funding, Medicaid provider tax provisions, and the implementation of a new assessment tool for residential settings, though its application to day services remains uncertain.

#### Summary

##### Day Array Committee Leadership Updates

The Day Array Committee meeting began with introductions of new co-chairs Paul Soprano and Chelsea Ashcraft, and featured updates from Stacy Collins and Kelly Shuck of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. Stacy announced Kelly's promotion to lead the community life engagement team and mentioned the retirement of two staff members. She provided updates on housing workgroup recommendations and ongoing questions about remote supports and assistive technology rules. The committee also discussed changes to the Basic Employment Skills Training Service, which will move away from age-based tiers to focus on an individual's progress along the path to competitive integrated employment, following CMS guidance.

### **Employment Services Rule Updates**

The meeting focused on discussing changes to employment services and rules, particularly regarding the Basic Employment Skills Training (BEST) program. Stacy clarified that the 4-year time limit for DODD review applies to all participants, not just those in specific tiers, and explained that the rule language is being updated to reflect "places on the path" rather than tiers. The group discussed the timeline for releasing new rule language, with Stacy noting that it would be very close to the July 1st waiver package deadline. Scott inquired about tools and resources for implementing the new rules, to which Stacy assured that such materials would be developed once the final decisions are made. The conversation ended with a discussion about youth employment outcomes and modifications to the Ohio Individual Service Plan (ISP) discovery assessment process.

### **Adult Day Center Safety Updates**

Stacy discussed the importance of providing resources and tools for Ohioans with developmental disabilities to communicate their needs, and Scott mentioned that feedback from the Inspector General's report on adult day centers would be used to develop new rule language. Scott presented findings from the Inspector General report, highlighting physical and safety hazards in adult day centers, and emphasized the need for providers to address these issues. Scott also reviewed updates to the Basic Employment Skills Training (BEST) rule, explaining that CMS had concerns about dividing the service by age and that DODD was revisiting the expectations for the service.

### **Group Employment Services Restructuring**

The group discussed changes to group employment services, including the removal of tiered renewal periods and the introduction of a small group enhanced rate for groups of 4 or fewer. Scott explained that while provider-owned businesses would be allowed, the rule proposes limiting group sizes to a maximum of 8 individuals per supervisor, which could impact larger existing programs. Tim raised concerns about budget implications for his program with 22 employees, and Scott advised against making concrete plans due to the uncertain implementation history of similar proposals.

### **CI Rate Proposal Controversy**

Scott explained that DODD's proposal to remove the CI rate for small groups with BEST is controversial, as it would prevent unpaid volunteering and educational services currently offered under CI VOC. He noted that while DODD sees this as a package that must be implemented together, the proposed solutions don't fully address the issue of unpaid pre-vocational supports. Scott also clarified that group employment services can still have multiple groups at one setting, with staff ratios of 1:4 for enhanced rates and 1:8 or less for regular rates. He expressed doubt about meeting the July 1st implementation deadline, given the challenges and ongoing discussions.

### **BEST Proposal and Employment Impact**

The meeting focused on the status of the BEST proposal and its relationship with the group employment rate enhancement. Scott explained that while he personally does not support the BEST proposal, there is concern about potentially losing the group employment proposal if BEST is abandoned. The group discussed how the "Place on the Path" proposal might affect different individuals, though specific details were not yet available. Scott shared that the remaining elements of the BEST proposal could be implemented through internal DODD policy rather than requiring rule language. The conversation ended with a live poll using the Kahoot platform to gauge participants' views on various aspects of the discussion.

### **Employment Services Poll Results Discussion**

The meeting focused on discussing the results of a poll regarding group employment and community integration (CI) services, which showed a split among providers. Scott highlighted the need to balance advocating for enhanced group employment rates while maintaining the CI rate, noting that further rule language from BEST

would be crucial in determining next steps. The group also addressed federal funding updates, including the recent government shutdown and its impact on Medicaid provider taxes, with no direct impact on their field. Additionally, concerns were raised about the implementation timeline and potential challenges of the Inter-Eye assessment tool, which is set to replace the DDP and AAI systems by 2027. The conversation ended with a call for providers to share their DNR policies and updates on the status of art studio programs under DODD policy.

**The next Day Array Committee meeting is scheduled for April 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 9:30am**

# Employment Services

## Summary

The employment services committee is designed for program directors, frontline supervisors, certified employment support professionals, job developers, and job coaches. This committee is a platform for information sharing, networking, deliberating, and problem-solving topics and issues unique to providing integrated, competitive employment services. Topics covered may include, but are not limited to, policy and rule review, state trends, understanding and implementing DODD, OOD, and ODM rules, braiding funding, best practices service delivery, establishing relationships with employers, supervising remote employees, operating fiscally sound programs, and dual customer model, and identifying and mitigating individual and programmatic risk. Policy recommendations from this committee are taken to the Day Array committee for review.

**Committee Chairs:** Justin Blumhorst (Capabilities) and Nicole Smith (RHDD)

**OPRA Staff Lead:** Scott Marks

**OPRA Employment Services Committee Report**  
**Thursday, March 5, 2026**  
**10:00am-11:30am**

## Quick recap

The Employment Services Committee meeting focused on several key updates and discussions. Jay and Kelly from OOD provided an overview of the budget situation and the implementation of a new encryption system called Purview, which will replace Zixmail for secure email communications. The committee also discussed the status of the GES and BEST proposals, which were not moving forward as initially planned. Dawn Bentley presented her "Disability Download" training video, which provides guidelines for interacting with individuals who have disabilities. The conversation ended with a discussion on progress reports for vocational services, with members sharing different approaches and templates to ensure compliance with rules and effectively document client progress.

## Summary

### Employment Services Committee Updates

The Employment Services Committee held its first meeting with new co-chairs Justin Blumhorst and Nicole Smith. Jay Burns and Kelly Rodriguez from OOD provided updates on the budget situation, which has been resolved for the remainder of the year, and announced the start of the Summer Youth Work Experience program with over 1,000 approved work sites across the state. They also discussed an upcoming change to the encryption service provider from Zixmail to Purview, which will offer enhanced security features and a more user-friendly experience with passcode access. The conversation ended with plans to discuss progress reporting requirements for VOCAV and Employment Services later in the meeting.

### Purview Email Migration Concerns

Justin expressed concerns about switching from Zixmail to Purview due to compatibility issues with Google Workspaces and the short implementation timeline. He noted that training 200 staff members on the new system within 20 days would be challenging, especially since the previous system automatically secured emails without requiring additional steps. Jay acknowledged these concerns and committed to investigating Google compatibility issues and exploring solutions for email initiation and team member inclusion in conversations. The discussion also highlighted potential workflow challenges, including email timeout windows and the need for additional guidance to support providers during the transition.

### Email System Transition Impact

The meeting focused on discussing a new email system implementation and its impact on counselors and processes. Justin warned about potential unintended consequences, including automatic encryption of emails containing certain keywords like "diagnosis" or "SSN." Jay explained that the state's decision to move away from Zixmail was driven by security concerns, though the transition has created some challenges for field operations. The discussion also touched on referral trends, with participants noting both improvements in the intake process and some concerns about slower referral numbers. Jay and Kelly reported that the new intake process has led to faster service times, with participants being seen within one to two weeks compared to a previous month-long wait in some areas.

### Disability Training Video Introduction

Dawn presented her disability advocacy background and introduced "The Disability Download," a training video she created to provide employers with best practices for interacting with people with disabilities. The video includes 15 guidelines covering topics like communication, accessibility, and inclusion, featuring real experiences from individuals with disabilities. Dawn emphasized the importance of ethical training practices and explained that the video is financially accessible, with options for one-time viewings and subscriptions, and she offered to work with organizations on pricing if needed.

### Employment Training and Proposal Updates

The meeting focused on two main topics: a discussion about Dawn's employment training video resource and updates on GES (Group Employment Services) and BEST proposals. Dawn shared information about her video and discussed potential licensing options for non-profit providers and county boards. The group also discussed the status of GES and BEST proposals, which will not move forward as initially planned due to CMS complications and lack of consensus on community integrated vocational services. The conversation ended with a discussion about

progress reports for vocational services, including required elements and best practices for documenting progress and scope of services.

**The next Employment Services Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00am**

# Health Care

## Summary

The Healthcare committee is comprised primarily of nursing staff but does include other members who are interested in health and healthcare related issues. The committee focuses on nursing and medical services in the waiver and ICF settings. Areas of focus include but are not limited to: rules and regulations that affect the DD nursing community, training, education and best practices.

**Committee Chair:** Shelly Wharton (The Society)

**OPRA Staff Lead:** Christine Touvelle

### **OPRA Health Care Committee Report**

**Thursday, February 19, 2026**

**10am-12pm**

#### **Healthcare Initiatives for Special Olympics**

The OPRA Healthcare Committee meeting featured presentations from Amy O'Neill of Special Olympics Ohio and Dr. David Jenkins from the Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine. Amy discussed Special Olympics' Healthy Athletes program, which provides free health screenings to athletes with intellectual disabilities, including dental, vision, and foot care. Dr. Jenkins detailed the Fit Feet program, which evaluates athletes for foot health issues, provides education on proper foot care, and offers free shoes and socks to those in need. The discussion highlighted challenges in providing follow-up care for athletes, particularly transportation barriers and the difficulty of contacting athletes after referrals. The conversation ended with an agreement to share contact information for healthcare providers, including a podiatrist in Akron, to help improve access to care for athletes.

#### **Disability Health Partnership Program Review**

David Ellsworth from the Ohio Department of Health and Ohio State University Nisonger Center presented on their CDC-funded Disability and Health Partnership program, which aims to improve health and wellness for people with disabilities. The program's funding ends in July, and David sought input from the group on potential future initiatives, including healthy living programs and policy changes. He highlighted the need for improved training for healthcare providers and community health workers in serving people with disabilities, as well as the importance of involving people with disabilities in advisory roles.

### **Disability Aging Care Resource Gaps**

The group discussed the lack of resources and training for supporting individuals with disabilities as they age, particularly in areas like dental health and complex behavior support needs. David highlighted a gap in aging with disabilities research and care, noting that current resources often focus on aging into disability rather than addressing the specific needs of older adults with disabilities. The discussion concluded with a call for input on potential training strategies and interventions to improve care for this vulnerable group.

### **Specialized Training for IDD Healthcare**

The group discussed challenges in healthcare for individuals with IDD, including pain management disparities and the need for specialized training for DSPs. David highlighted the importance of addressing aging and dementia in this population, while Rachel shared insights on unexpected deaths and the need for staff education. The participants agreed on the necessity of integrating specialized training into core competencies for medical professionals and DSPs, with Melissa suggesting the inclusion of such education in provider orientations.

### **Consent Challenges in Disability Care**

The meeting focused on challenges in obtaining consent for treatment of non-verbal patients with disabilities, particularly when their guardians are unavailable. Dr. Jenkins shared resources from the American Academy of Developmental Disabilities in Dentistry, including Project ECHO and educational opportunities through Special Olympics Arizona. Christine announced upcoming in-person Director of Nursing meetings in April, August, and December, which will provide opportunities for networking and sharing resources among healthcare providers.

**The next Health Care Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> @ 10am at**

# Human Resources/Biz Ops

## Summary

The Business Operations Committee combines core HR topics—such as employment law and regulatory updates, recruitment and retention strategies, and policy sharing—with communication best practices and expanded content covering broader business operations and finance topics. The committee will feature guest presentations from operational experts, software vendors, and peer-driven idea sharing among OPRA members. Meetings are structured to allow participants to attend all or select portions relevant to their roles.

**Committee Chairs:** Carla McDonald (Weaver Industries), Melissa Hart (The Society)

**OPRA Staff Lead:** Christine Touvelle

**OPRA Human Resources Committee Report**  
**Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**10am-12pm**

### **Summary**

#### **OPRA Compensation Survey Update**

The OPRA HR Committee meeting with updates on the compensation, benefits, and turnover survey. She mentioned that OPRA is finalizing a contract with Compensation Resources for the next survey, which will be

released in mid-April and collected over the next two months. The final report is expected in late summer, with an incentive of a free copy for participants.

### **Medication Error Reporting Requirements**

The Department of Developmental Disabilities released new rules regarding medication administration, including a requirement that all medication and treatment errors must be immediately reported in the MAIS system. The department's new rule mandates that agencies must make immediate staffing arrangements whenever a medication error occurs, though the exact interpretation of "immediate" and the required actions remain unclear. Christine expressed concern about the unrealistic expectations of the rule, particularly regarding documentation errors and unexpected situations that lead to errors. The group agreed to submit comments to DODD by next Monday, and Shelly suggested involving the Board of Nursing in future discussions to better understand their perspective.

### **Committee Restructuring**

The meeting discussed staffing arrangements and medication administration rules for independent providers, with Matthew clarifying that shared living providers must follow medication administration rules and cannot claim non-provision of services during medication times. Christine announced plans to transform the HR committee into a Business Operations Committee by merging it with the Marketing and Communications Committee, expanding its scope to include business development, finance, and operational topics.

### **System Modernization and Provider Initiatives**

The conversation ended with a discussion of OPRA's DD system modernization plan, which aims to address fiscal challenges facing county boards and prepare for future governance changes, with Christine inviting input from colleagues on the proposed initiatives. The meeting focused on discussing a modernization plan for the system, with Christine presenting key policy ideas and seeking feedback from the group. The plan includes initiatives such as implementing a 1915B waiver for selective contracting, adopting provider readiness reviews and hubs, and creating a professional registry. Concerns were raised about the potential for staff to move between agencies after receiving training, and the group discussed the need to clarify which trainings would be portable in the proposed registry.

## **OPRA Business Operations Committee Report**

**Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**10am-12pm**

### **Summary**

#### **Committee Operations Feedback Meeting**

The meeting focused on gathering feedback from committee members about operational topics and preferences. Participants discussed their organization's services, defining operations, and identified key pain points, with staffing emerging as the top concern. Members expressed interest in various topics including fundraising, compliance, marketing, and technology, with "all of the above" being the preferred content type for committee presentations. The session concluded with a request for vendor suggestions, particularly around technology and AI, before transitioning to a discussion on provider compliance and certification led by Teresa.

#### **Provider Certification and Compliance System Modernization Proposal**

Christine and Teresa discussed proposed changes to the provider certification and compliance process within OPRA's system modernization plan. The current system, which involves nearly 14,000 providers reviewed every

three years regardless of risk level, was described as inefficient and potentially burdensome. They proposed shifting to a risk-based, lifecycle approach with tiered requirements for different provider types, including agencies, non-agency providers, and independent providers. The new system would focus on financial stability, governance requirements, and active participation, with monitoring scaled to match provider type and risk level rather than the current one-size-fits-all approach. Participants raised questions about how the framework would apply to for-profit organizations and multi-state providers, with Teresa acknowledging these would need specific considerations.

The group discussed concerns about provider certification and compliance, particularly focusing on smaller organizations' sustainability and emergency planning. Pete Moore and Teresa noted that while there is openness at the department level to discussing entry and certification requirements, the current compliance approach may not effectively improve quality. The discussion highlighted the need for a more supportive compliance system that encourages performance improvement rather than just punitive measures, with participants expressing frustration about recent citation trends and inconsistent compliance reviews. The group agreed to explore potential training sessions for experienced providers who could help support struggling organizations, and Pete indicated plans to share compliance concerns with Director Nash, including the possibility of pursuing legislative changes if needed.

### **Setting Size**

Teresa presented on setting size, challenging the assumption that smaller settings automatically lead to better care, and proposed collecting data on the relationship between size, cost, and outcomes rather than implementing a fixed number change. The discussion highlighted the need for data-informed policy decisions about when and how flexibility in setting size and proximity might be appropriate.

### **OPRA Compensation Survey Updates**

Christine announced updates to OPRA's biennial compensation, benefits, and turnover survey, which will be distributed in April by third-party vendor Compensation Resources. The survey has been revised to better capture actual frontline staff wages and includes new overtime questions, with participation being crucial for advocacy efforts with the legislature. Christine will send out a detailed email to the full membership in the coming weeks, including links to housing workgroup town halls where additional feedback can be provided.

### **Classification Updates**

The group reviewed proposed changes to the Department of Labor's test for classifying workers as independent contractors versus employees, with a 60-day comment period ending April 28th. The team also explored the possibility of conducting a survey to gather information about various business technologies, including billing, documentation, HR, and workflow software, with participants expressing interest in sharing pros and cons of different tools while ensuring any feedback remains unbiased and non-recommending.

**The next Business Operations Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 20<sup>th</sup> @ 10am**

# Residential Resources

## Summary

The ICF & Residential Waiver Committees was combined as a forum for providers offering residential services, including ICF and waiver-based models. The committee explores funding, staffing, regulatory requirements, and issues that have a direct impact on the programs and services our members offer.

**Committee Chair(s):** Susan Berneike (Help Foundation)

**OPRA Board Liaison:** Jamie Steele (OVRS)

**OPRA Staff Lead:** Rachel Hayes

### The new meeting structure beginning in 2025:

#### 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM | Residential Waiver

Focused on updates, discussions, and presentations specific to the Residential Waiver service.

#### 11:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Department Updates/Presentations

Content applicable to both Residential Waiver (RW) and ICF services.

#### 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM | ICF

Centered on updates, discussions, and presentations specific to the ICF service.

### OPRA Residential Resources Committee Report

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

9:30am – 1:00pm

## Summary

### Ohio County Service Assessment Changes

The Residential Resources Committee meeting discussed concerns about service cuts and reassessments across Ohio counties. Providers reported that county boards are increasingly focusing on need-based services rather than wants, with some using their own assessments without sharing them beforehand. It was shared that Portage County is reassessing high-cost cases, with some SSAs being receptive to developing plans while others take a more rigid approach. The committee also discussed upcoming changes to the committee's structure and charter, as well as upcoming Department of DD webinars about the interRAI on March 9th and 10th.

### Service Delivery Strategy Concerns

Some expressed concerns about abrupt changes in service delivery, emphasizing the need for a strategic and data-driven approach to avoid increased UIs and MUIs. They highlighted a disconnect between superintendents and SSAs, advocating for proactive planning and education to address these issues. Another shared a case in Montgomery County where an individual's request for additional day program attendance was denied without a clear policy or procedure, raising questions about the definition of "need" in service delivery. Others discussed similar experiences in other counties, highlighting a lack of transparency and collaboration in assessment processes, which they believe could worsen with the new state-wide assessment system.

### **Assessment Process and Resource Accessibility**

The meeting focused on concerns about assessment processes and resource accessibility. Participants discussed issues with the provider search tool, including outdated and incorrect information, and emphasized the need for accurate and easily accessible resources for providers and families. Peter Moore highlighted the importance of using available tools, such as MUIs and appeals, to address concerns about health and safety risks. It was suggested involving Anchor, similar to past actions with DOJ, if issues persist. Rachel requested specific examples of assessment concerns to forward to Director Nash for review. The group also discussed challenges with accessing and using certain resources, such as health and safety alerts, and explored potential solutions for improving resource availability and accessibility.

### **Clarifying DSP Competency and MAIS**

Someone raised concerns about the competency add-on process for DSPs, noting conflicting information about whether an application is required before training. Rachel agreed to investigate and provide clarity on the process. The group also discussed ongoing issues with the MAIS system for medication administration, with Christine explaining their concerns about the department's proposed rule requiring all medication errors to be reported, regardless of severity. There was expressed strong opposition to this requirement, highlighting its potential impact on staffing and recruitment in the industry.

### **Ohio Medication Error Reporting Debate**

The group discussed concerns about new medication error reporting requirements for waiver providers in Ohio, with participants questioning whether the rules were necessary given the low rate of medication errors. One member said they had 387 medication errors in 2025 out of 423,000 treatments, equivalent to 0.0009%, while other providers suggested collecting data to demonstrate the minimal impact of medication errors. The discussion revealed uncertainty about whether the rules would apply to independent providers and concerns that the requirements might be more stringent than those for hospitals, with participants agreeing to gather data to challenge the justification for the new regulations.

### **Committee Leadership and Compliance Updates**

Jamie will transition to a board liaison role for the committee, while Susan will continue as chair for another year. Nominations are open for the Residential Waiver Committee chair position, with applications due by the end of March. Stephanie from DODD announced a restructuring of their compliance management team, reorganizing by county rather than superintendent regions. The top compliance citations in 2025 were primarily related to service documentation, and Stephanie confirmed that the compliance tool would remain accessible on the website despite upcoming changes.

### **Medicaid Compliance and Provider Updates**

The meeting covered several key topics, including compliance and documentation issues in Medicaid. Stephanie from the Ohio Department of Medicaid explained that while PDFs need to be built accessible, all information will be available on the website. The department is working towards compliance and ensuring providers have quick access to necessary tools. Concerns about fraud, abuse, and waste were raised, and Stephanie confirmed that documentation is a key area of focus. The group discussed the importance of proper documentation and the potential for future audits. One inquired about data on citation errors, and Stephanie agreed to provide more information if available. The meeting also addressed the upcoming 3-year provider certification process, with one inquiring about the status of his renewal. Stephanie promised to follow up personally and investigate the delay.

Finally, Rachel announced upcoming events and initiatives, including a Healthcare Committee meeting, DD Advocacy Day, and a new Just Culture series starting in April. She also introduced a new spotlight feature for meetings to share best practices and innovations among providers.

### **ICF and Residential Waiver Updates**

The meeting focused on two main topics: the residential waiver and ICF (Intermediate Care Facility) portions. Rachel discussed concerns about the situation in Minnesota, where providers are facing threats to their livelihoods, and suggested keeping an eye on potential similar issues in Ohio. In the ICF portion, Rachel outlined several agenda items, including a discussion on Senate Bill 35 regarding supported decision-making, workforce development add-ons, compliance data, and waiver requirements for CPR. The conversation ended with an invitation for participants to express concerns about Senate Bill 35 and its potential impact on ICF providers.

### **Supported Decision-Making Bill Discussion**

Christine explained that Senate Bill 35 aims to establish supported decision-making as a legal framework, allowing individuals to make decisions with support rather than full guardianship. She clarified that the bill does not automatically replace existing guardianships but allows individuals to request changes through probate court if needed. It raised concerns about potential conflicts between guardians and advocates under the bill, while another highlighted the challenges providers might face in mediating such disputes. The group agreed that more resources are needed to clarify the bill's implications and its differences from the Never Alone Act.

### **SB 35 and Compliance Updates**

The group discussed Senate Bill 35, focusing on concerns about gaps in the legislation and potential conflicts of interest for agency staff as supported decision-making advocates. Pete suggested obtaining an FAQ from Kristen Henry of APSE to address these concerns. Rachel reminded providers to spend the remaining Professional Workforce Development add-on funds before June 30th, as the 10% rate increase will expire. Rachel presented data on Ohio's compliance with CMS requirements for 2025, noting that service documentation and wrap-back enrollment were major citation areas, and that Ohio had 134 overdue surveys that needed to be completed.

### **Ohio ICF Survey Deficiency Trends**

Rachel presented survey data for Ohio ICFs, noting they are 134 surveys behind schedule. She shared that Ohio had 808 total deficiencies in 2025, with 18 COPs and 65 deficiencies from complaint surveys. The top CMS citations included nursing services, infection control, and drug administration. One shared an example of a recent survey where a small home received 16 citations despite having minimal previous citations. A member discussed a December citation for not having a medical director, despite using Station MD services at a significant cost. The group discussed alternative solutions for medical director requirements, others offering to get in contact with medical director services in their areas.

### **ICF Program Data Collection Planning**

The meeting focused on data collection for the ICF program, with Teresa outlining plans for a pilot survey to gather information on referrals, waitlists, and barriers to serving specific populations. Rachel discussed the challenges of tracking referral data and waitlist information, while highlighting the need for coordination between ODH and DODD on serving individuals with intensive behavioral needs. The group also discussed transitioning committee chairs, with Bob and Kurt stepping down to become board liaisons and new chairs being sought through nominations by the end of March. Finally, Rachel announced plans to spotlight member achievements in



future meetings and encouraged participation in upcoming events, including a Healthcare Committee meeting on foot health and a Just Culture Learning Collaborative.

**The next meeting of the RR committee is scheduled for April 15<sup>th</sup> @ 9:30am.**