

Testimony
Senate Sub-committee
Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Cafaro and Members
of the Senate Medicaid Committee:

My name is Than Johnson and I am the CEO for Champaign Residential Services (CRSI) in Urbana, Ohio. CRSI is a non-profit private service provider in nearly 30 counties in west Ohio. We are one of the largest Medicaid waiver providers and also a provider of ICFIID services.

CRSI was incorporated by families to prevent institutionalization of their siblings in the late 1970's. It currently has a majority of parents, advocates and consumers on its 17 member board of trustees.

CRSI serves nearly 800 individuals with disabilities with a highly valued workforce of 1300 staff.

I have had the honor of being State President of OPRA and also served as National President of our national association ANCOR over my career. I've also been honored to be appointed to the National Medicare Advisory Board by President Bush and served on technical assistance committees for CMS/Medicaid services. Currently I serve as national co-chair of the ANCOR Government Affairs Committee and Past President of OPRA.

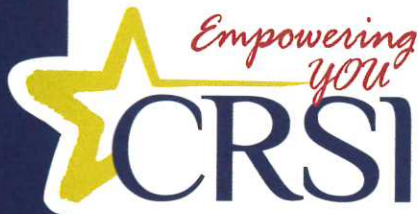
As a prior President of OPRA, I have great respect for not only Director John Martin and his capable staff, but also for the need of our system to coalesce around a common message/agreement on the future of our services and supports for citizens with disabilities. I felt we reached that point of agreement in what was called the 'Grand Bargain' 2 years ago which set a framework for moving our system toward outcomes of smaller settings and re-balancing of service models that expanded home and community based services and yet provided a choice of ICFIID setting if so desired by the individual with disabilities. It is the assumption of the four associations (OACBDD, OPRA, OHCA, and VFA) that the 'Grand Bargain' is still in effect and should be considered as the framework for this budget and the next state budget. OPRA and the other stakeholder groups have reached an agreement to continue most aspects of the 'Grand Bargain' for the ICFIID program and expansion of HCB waiver services for citizens with disabilities.

I greatly appreciate many aspects of the Governor's State Budget proposals. I also have concern with the lack of any fiscal increase for the ICFIID program for the 1st year of the proposed budget. With 70% of the costs to the ICFIID program being direct support wages and benefits, there is a clear and present need to provide funding our highly valued, but lowly paid direct support staff. There has been little increase in the overall state budget for the ICFIID program (less than 4% over prior 10 years) as it continues to suffer major costs increases in health benefits, comparable wages to state and county, downsizing expenses associated with expanded sites, a case mix that requires much more support in areas of high Medical and high Behavior for individuals served, and inflation.

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It is also my hope that the proposed 2nd year 2% funding increase requested by DODD will be used to benefit the largest amount of providers as possible, particularly those that demonstrate administration efficiencies and provide high quality care without exceeding ceilings. CRSI is proud to have earned efficiencies in non-direct/administrative area every year for the last 25 years and maintain high quality in settings regardless of setting size or needs of the individuals.

For CRSI, the real challenge is recruiting, retaining and affording a high valued workforce. As much as we greatly appreciate Governor Kasich's achievement in having Medicaid Expansion (ME) in Ohio, ACA as a federal 'unfunded mandate' will still cost, as an example, CRSI over \$400,000 in additional healthcare costs 'annually' (it would be closer to \$2 million without ME). Most of that additional cost will have to be paid for out of current staff wages which puts an additional burden on staff and the recruiting of those staff members.

I would also be remiss if I did not point out that loss of the tangible personal property tax revenue for county boards of DD at a time when they are faced also with a challenge to change the day services model is an area that needs discussion and remedy.

My final and most important comment concerns the critical need for the Ohio Senate to fully fund the Governor's DODD funding initiatives in the budget as introduced. H.B. 64 includes a historic investment of new monies into Ohio's DD System. The new funding addresses multiple short and long-term systemic needs and does so in a finely woven interconnected way. For those in immediate need of service the budget offers renewed hope and choice of supports. The new funds also strengthen our home and community based waiver system in ways that have long been acknowledged but never funded. And for the first time an administration recognizes and begins to address our workforce crisis at the community provider level. Quite simply this is the single most important investment of resources into our system that I have ever seen.

Our immediate challenge is that due to the adoption of LSC cost projections the funding portions of the DD budget were significantly cut coming out of the House. We desperately need them restored. I ask that you act to fully fund the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities budget as it was introduced.

As our field faces the challenge of DRO and possibly DOJ in restructuring our services and supports, we have to be mindful of adequate resources to recruit and retain workforce for community based ICFIID settings and HCB community based setting.

Thank you for providing me with opportunity to provide input into the shaping of our state budget for the state of Ohio and its citizens.

Respectfully submitted,
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