

## Developmental Supports

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March 7, 2017

To: Senator Carolyn McGinn, Chair  
Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee

Re: SB 173 – Home and Community Based Services Rate Increase Bill

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 173. Johnson County Developmental Supports is the Community Developmental Disabilities Organization for the county. We oversee a network of nearly 1,700 individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability, as well as the county's 75 providers of Home and Community Based Services that allow these individuals to live in the community rather than in hospitals or institutions.

While we understand the committee will hear testimony on a number of different impacts of stagnant or decreasing rates, we would like to focus on changing mandates and policy changes that have increased expectations on the I/DD system or reduced funding through policy changes, not direct rate cuts.

Since SFY 2008, reimbursement rates for I/DD HCBS programs have remained unchanged despite a 13 percent rise in inflation. During that same timeframe, contributions from the State General Fund have decreased 76 percent, making the I/DD system increasingly reliant on HCBS reimbursement rates. SB 173 begins to move in the right direction.

Federal mandates such as the HCBS Final Rule and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act are philosophically sound. The objectives of these mandates for people with I/DD include opportunities such as more choices, more community inclusion and higher wages. However, enacting the system changes to help achieve these outcomes does not come with additional funding. These changes are focused on more individual supports, as opposed to congregate, but the funding does not work in its current form.

Through the state, while the actual rates have stayed stagnant, there have been cuts achieved through policy changes. The allotments that went into effect in July of 2016 stated there were no cuts to HCBS. But the allotments did include two policy changes to reduce HCBS spending by \$2.6 million in State General Funds. The Capable Person and Residential Pay policies are another reduction to the resources need to support individuals in the community.

At the same time rates have stayed the same and state funding has **decreased**, the complexity of the needs of the population we serve has **increased**. Due to several factors, people with I/DD are living longer, which unfortunately means we are supporting more people with an age-related illness such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease. We're also seeing more people with the dual diagnosis of an I/DD and a mental illness. These issues require more specialized resources and staff training, for example, in an environment with no additional funding to meet these complex needs of the people we serve.

Locally, the erosion of resources in Johnson County, is leading us to a network in crisis. Ten businesses, I/DD HCBS providers, have decided to stop providing I/DD services in the past five years. Two more have notified us that they are either reducing services or closing. As a county agency, the property tax lid is another reduction in our potential array of options to respond to the systemic crisis situations.

**JOHNSON COUNTY**  
KANSAS  
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The State of Kansas made a commitment to those with I/DD through the Developmental Disabilities Reform Act (DDRA) in 1995. The DDRA opened a world of opportunity for people to allow for "opportunities of choice to increase their independence and productivity and integration and inclusion into the community." This landmark statute also committed to a "system of adequate and reasonable funding or reimbursement for the delivery of community services." SB 173 would help begin to restore the promise in the DDRA.

We appreciate the opportunity to further discuss the systemic need to restore funding for I/DD, as well as other HCBS programs. We value the importance of our partnership with the State of Kansas and thank you for your support of community based services for those with disabilities.

Sincerely,



Chad VonAhnen  
Executive Director  
Johnson County Developmental Supports