

PROPOSAL BRIEF

Proposal Title:	DSP Compensation
Proposal Sponsor:	OHCA/OPRA/OWN
Date Proposed:	7/6/21

Problem or Opportunity Statement

Direct support professional compensation is extremely low for the highly important services they provide. This leads to the inability to attract a sufficient number of staff to the workforce and has led to many people receiving reduced services or not being able to receive service at all. Additionally, with a reduced workforce, many DSPs are being mandated to work overtime which often puts their public benefits (Medicaid, child care, food stamps, etc.) in jeopardy. All of these things are the key contributors to why more people do not seek employment in the DD field and when they do, why they leave the field.

The Proposal

Create Medicaid reimbursement rates with a DSP wage component that reflects the value of the service being provided by the DSP and is sufficient to attract enough workforce to provide all Ohioans with developmental disabilities access to the services they need.

Create Medicaid reimbursement rates which appropriately consider other compensation needed to support DSPs in their workplace including training, appropriate supervision and other support services (nursing, psychology, mentors, etc.).

Either create Medicaid reimbursement rates which include benefit structures similar to most other job opportunities (ex. paid time off, health insurance, retirement, dental, etc.) or create a program where workers in the DD field do not lose benefits as they are asked to work overtime or are given raises, to prevent DSPs experiencing benefit cliffs.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would allow DD services to compete for workforce with other businesses • Would allow people with DD access to the services they need • Would fairly compensate DSPs for the work they perform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could be extremely costly – would need support of administration and legislature • Some of the benefit programs have federal requirements – would require advocacy at the federal level to implement special eligibility criteria for this set of workers

Critical Questions

- 1) What compensation level is appropriate for the work being performed/services being provided?
- 2) How much do we value these services?
- 3) If we can't bring more employees into our services, are we ok with telling Ohioans they cannot receive services or the amount of service they receive will be limited?
- 4) If increasing wages/compensation is not supported, what alternative measures can we take to meet the needs of the largest number of people with DD in Ohio?

Reference Materials / Attachments

- 1) Data/Hot Spots Draft Presentation (survey data):
 - The number one response from both providers and CBs in the survey to the question “What can DODD/CBs do to help?” was “Advocate for Funding/Rate Increases.”
 - Only 12.6% of providers are currently able to serve more people than they are serving now
 - About 38% of providers have already consolidated services due to staffing issues
 - About 63% of providers have had to establish financial measures beyond what they are compensated to attract or retain workers
 - Almost 36% of families stated they have gone without the services they need due to staffing
 - Another 31% of families said they have received a reduced amount of service and another 26% of families said they have relied on unpaid caregivers when they normally would have had a paid provider
- 2) National Core Indicators Staff Stability Survey:
https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/upload/core-indicators/2019StaffStabilitySurveyReport_FINAL_1_6_21.pdf
As of 2019 Ohio DSP turnover was 43%, Average hourly wage for all DSPs was \$11.74, the average starting wage was \$10.96 and overtime was 12.1% of the total hours paid. While we don't have current data, we know that the situation is much worse now and wages for other industries that compete for the same workers are paying starting wages of \$17-20/hr.
- 3) Center for Community Solutions “The Benefit Cliff” webinar (see attached slides)