



The Honorable Mike DeWine  
 Governor, State of Ohio  
 77 South High Street, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Columbus, OH 43215

February 22, 2018

Dear Governor DeWine:

On behalf of our respective members and the people with developmental disabilities they support, we are pleased to present you with our shared list of priorities for the Fiscal Year 2020-21 State Budget. We are unified in our support for these proposals and look forward to working with you in the coming months to achieve the initiatives outlined below.

**1. Address Ohio’s Direct Support Workforce Crisis**

Services for people with developmental disabilities (DD) are in serious jeopardy due to the high level of direct support staff turnover and the overall shortage of willing and able employees for DD service providers. We request the State of Ohio appropriate funds in this budget to increase the homemaker personal care rate so it can support an average wage of \$13/hr for direct support professionals (DSPs) by the end of FY 2021. We also support raising the on-site/on-call rate to be based on Ohio’s current minimum wage of \$8.55/hr (today’s rate is based on \$6.19/hr and was last updated in 2005).

**2. Support Revised Non-Medical Transportation Reimbursement Rate Proposal**

Our current reimbursement system for non-medical transportation (NMT) is outdated, based on facility-based service models, and intended for large group congregate transport. The new rate structure proposed by the NMT stakeholder workgroup has the support of all major DD stakeholders as well as representatives of the State of Ohio who participated in the workgroup process. We are in favor of this proposal’s implementation and support DODD’s plan to allocate \$5 million during each year of the biennium to support the new rate structure.

**3. Protect Health and Safety with a Provider Summary Suspension Process**

The most recent state budget created a workgroup to propose ways in which county boards can better identify health and safety risks posed by providers and alert state authorities when it becomes imperative to move affected individuals out of harm’s way. We support the adoption of the workgroup’s recommendation in its report to the General Assembly (the establishment of a summary suspension process above and beyond the Department’s suspension authority in ORC Section 5123.166) and are committed to working together as stakeholders to achieve consensus on statutory and administrative rule changes to further define the parameters and processes of summary suspension.

**4. Create Multi-System Solutions for High-Needs Youth**

Ohio’s county-based safety net agencies (developmental disabilities, job and family services, children’s services, behavioral health and addiction services, and family and children first councils) currently do not have an effective way to support those children and teens whose significant needs overlap any single agency’s jurisdiction and ability to offer necessary supports. To ensure high-needs youth can access critical services and supports with as little bureaucratic overlap and financial waste as possible, we support the creation of a funding vehicle and streamlined service coordination process that will allow the State of Ohio and county-based safety net agencies to work together to help high-needs youth get the support they need.

Thank you for your consideration of these major priorities for our system. We stand together in our support of these proposals and look forward to helping you advocate for their inclusion in Ohio’s upcoming biennial budget. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

Sincerely,

**Bridget Gargan**  
 Executive Director, OACB

**Anita Allen**  
 Interim CEO, OPRA

**Gary Tonks**  
 CEO, The Arc of Ohio

**Peter Van Runkle**  
 Executive Director, OHCA

**Tom Rickels**  
 President, Ohio Waiver Network

**Deb Lyle**  
 President, Values and Faith Alliance