



Governor DeWine
State of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH
43215-6117

April 6, 2020

Dear Governor DeWine,

We hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you on behalf of the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) membership, over 180 developmental disability service providers in Ohio, as well as the people and families that they support. Our members, and the direct support professionals they employ are among the frontlines of the Covid-19 crisis, delivering essential services to Ohioans with developmental disabilities. We are grateful for the actions taken by the state of Ohio over the past several weeks in response to the public health crisis caused by Covid-19. The state's actions to curb the infection, as well as actions taken in support of our members to create flexibility and relax certain processes have been greatly appreciated.

I am writing you now as we enter a more dire situation for our members and the people they support. For the past several weeks, our members have taken enormous efforts to cope and adapt to the crisis, ensuring necessary services, while maintaining a safe work environment for their staff and people they serve. As nearly every business in Ohio has done, our members have worked tirelessly to shift their business models, attempted to keep up with a changing state and federal regulatory landscape and strived to keep up morale of their staff and clients.

As we head into the peak of the crisis, we fear that without immediate relief, the disability service system will be pushed beyond its breaking point. We believe you hold the key to that relief through provisions available in the 1135 and Appendix K waivers. We know your Administration has been working on these key pieces. It is now urgent that they are completed and submitted early this week.

Our primary goal is to provide for the safety and well-being of Ohioans with disabilities, and we need a strong, healthy workforce to do that. As covid-19 has started impacting Ohioans with developmental disabilities and the staff that support them, Ohio needs to take swift action to keep people with disabilities safe and ensure the safety of Direct Support Professionals. Ohio's submission of the K and 1135 could provide immediate support by allowing for increased hazard pay for DSPs delivering essential services, financial support for agencies paying massive amounts of overtime, as well as the regulatory relief necessary for providers to be nimble and creative in how they deliver services and keep their critical workforce engaged.



We also are requesting any assistance the state of Ohio can provide in the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment for our DSPs, even as simply as listing disability service providers when directing people wanting to donate PPE.

We appreciate your support and leadership through this crisis, as well as your vocal support for Direct Support Professionals of Ohio. Those DSPs and the people and families they support need your help now, more than ever. We believe our members and all providers of developmental disability services across this state are focused on keeping their staff, the people they serve and their families informed, supported and empowered. We are respectfully asking that you and your team offer the necessary support to our providers in recognition of their efforts as they support, care for and protect our most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Peter Moore
President/CEO
Ohio Provider Resource Association
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CC:
Director Maureen Corcoran, ODM
Director Jeff Davis, DODD