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**Over 100 Disability and Aging Advocates Urge Ohio Senate to Take Action on Provider Crisis**  
*Concerns intensify after funding for home and community-based services (HCBS) comes up short in House-passed version of the budget bill.*

Columbus, Ohio, (May 12, 2021)—The Ohio Home and Community-Based Services Coalition is urging the State Senate to support critical HCBS funding through Medicaid reimbursement rate increases. Throughout the budget process, the HCBS Coalition has advocated for a 10% increase across the biennium (5% in FY22 and 5% in FY23) in provider rates to help retain and recruit a much-needed workforce in order to increase access to care and fill Medicaid service gaps.

Advocates fear that lack of investment in home and community-based services will directly impact the HCBS workforce. An important part of this workforce includes home health aides, personal care aides, and nursing assistants who are low income and disproportionately Black, Indigenous, or People of Color. In addition, the skilled home health workforce also includes nurses, physical, occupational, and speech language pathologist who are currently reimbursed slightly less today than they were in 1998.

“The funding increase is critical, and long overdue. We are hopeful that this issue will be a key priority for the Ohio Senate during their budget deliberations,” said Kerstin Sjoberg, spokesperson for the HCBS Coalition. “A key investment in home and community-based infrastructure now will provide a direct benefit to people. This increase will put money in the pockets of direct care workers and enable providers to recruit additional talent to the workforce.”

Supporting direct care workers will help bring stability to the foundation of Ohio’s HCBS system. A timely investment will help address the current provider crisis. It will also ensure that people with disabilities and older adults have the choice to age in place and live independently through the support of home care workers.

The need for home care workers is projected to increase 34% over the next 10 years. Increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates now will help providers better serve the Medicaid population, bolster more cost-effective forms of care and reduce workforce turnover. Most importantly, it will provide financial support directly to those workers providing in-home care so that they can afford to support their own families.

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The HCBS Coalition is made up of well-known disability and aging advocates in Ohio including: Disability Rights Ohio, Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council, Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council, and Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice.

You can read the full HCBS Coalition testimony [here](#).

**About Disability Rights Ohio:** Disability Rights Ohio is the federally and state designated Protection and Advocacy System and Client Assistance Program for the state of Ohio. The mission of Disability Rights Ohio is to advocate for the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities in Ohio. Disability Rights Ohio provides legal advocacy and rights protection to a wide range of people with disabilities. Find more information at [www.disabilityrightsohio.org](http://www.disabilityrightsohio.org).

**About the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council:** The Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council (Ohio SILC) is a federally mandated board for the State of Ohio. The Ohio SILC is responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of the State Plan for Independent Living, a three-year strategic plan for Ohio to work towards goals of greater access, inclusion and independence for individuals with disabilities. Find more information at [www.ohiosilc.org](http://www.ohiosilc.org).

**About the Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice:** Established in 1965, the Ohio Council for Home Care & Hospice (OCHCH) is a non-profit association that represents the interests of health care at home providers in Ohio. OCHCH advocates for ethical, compassionate, and quality home and community-based care, as well as for the individuals and families our members serve. As the voice of health care at home, we strive to provide value, resources, and partnership for those who provide care for our most vulnerable citizens. Find more information at [www.ochch.org](http://www.ochch.org).

**About the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council:** The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council is one of a national network of state councils, committed to self-determination and community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities. The Council's mission is to create change that improves independence, productivity and inclusion for people with developmental disabilities and their families in community life in Ohio. Find more information at [ddc.ohio.gov](http://ddc.ohio.gov).

**About the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging:** O4A is a nonprofit, statewide network of agencies that provide services for older Ohioans, people with disabilities and their families. The Association engages in national and statewide advocacy to address issues which have an impact on the aging and disability network and older Ohioans and people with disabilities, provides services to members, and serves as a collective voice for Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). Find more information at [www.ohioaging.org](http://www.ohioaging.org).