

Chair Noor and Members of the Human Service Finance Committee,

My name is Mary Gaasch and I am the Director of Advocacy and Community Relations for Hammer Residences. We help people with intellectual disabilities live the life they want to live.

Hammer supports additional, sustainable investments in our Disability Waiver Rate System. Like every other provider of disability services, we are struggling to attract and retain Direct Support Professionals. The rates we pay our current DSPs are not adequate for the complex work they do, from changing suprapubic catheters to managing feeding tubes. My 16 year old twin boys make more money in a food service job than we are able to pay our DSPS.

The workforce crisis is forcing Hammer and other providers to reduce services, close programs and turn away folks with the highest levels of need. We need an investment in our care infrastructure that will sustain these vital services.

Thank you for your service,

Mary Gaasch
Director of Advocacy and Community Relations
Hammer