



October 22, 2021

Dear Individuals, Families and Guardians,

Unfortunately, the developmental disabilities field in Ohio continues to struggle with finding and hiring people as Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). This workforce crisis continues to worsen as employers in other fields have the ability to use highly competitive measures to attract new employees. Our local service provider agencies' ability to recruit and retain qualified DSP staff (specifically, those who provide in-home supports) has become increasingly difficult. Medina County providers are experiencing staffing shortages, as well as burn out and fatigue among their current DSP staff.

These staffing shortages are now beginning to impact day programs, transportation, and residential support. Because of the inability to find and hire DSP staff, many local service providers are having to take, in some cases, drastic measures to continue to provide services. The providers in our county have been making extraordinary efforts to minimize the impact of the staffing crisis on the individuals they provide service to each day. They have been increasing overtime, asking managers to cover shifts, consolidating services and locations to required fewer staff, and eliminating non-staffing expenses in attempts to divert funds to raising DSP wages to attract new employees.

We are reaching out to ask you to be an active part of the process as we face this crisis together.
What can you do to help?

First, and most importantly, you can reach out to the DSPs in your life and let them know how much you appreciate them. Remember that the DSPs in your life may be covering multiple shifts and working overtime on a regular basis to ensure services are not interrupted. Let them know their efforts are not going unnoticed.

Second, you may be contacted at some point about an inability to provide services due to a staffing shortage. Your Service and Support Administrator (SSA) may need to talk with you about the need to consider a different type of service option because the staff needed to maintain your current services may not exist. You may be asked to consider what natural supports you are able to provide or if remote supports and assistive technology may be able to assist your situation. We will all do our very best to work with you to make sure your needs are met.

Finally, if you or someone you know may be interested in becoming a DSP, please contact our Community Supports Department at 330-725-7751; option 3, or email providersupport@mcbdd.org for more information and available opportunities.

As the DSP workforce crisis continues, there are many short and long term solutions being discussed statewide and initiatives being put in place in an effort to combat this situation. Also know the MCBDD is working daily to try and address local issues as they are arising. We want to assure you that we are here to help. We will continue to share additional information, efforts, and resources as we navigate these challenging times. If you have any questions about this information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Stacey Maleckar, Superintendent
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