

**Ohio House Finance
Health and Human Services Subcommittee
Testimony
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Good afternoon Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Goyal and members of the subcommittee. My name is Erica Drewry and I am the Executive Director of Heritage Day Health Centers, a non-profit adult day services provider. I appreciate the opportunity to address this committee and share my thoughts about the proposed changes to PASSPORT in Governor Kasich's budget.

First, let me share a little background information. Heritage Day Health Centers is the largest provider of adult day services in the State of Ohio. We have been providing care to older and disabled Ohioans for 27 years. We have centers in Franklin, Delaware and Ross Counties. We currently serve approximately 550 individuals and their families. The primary goal of adult day services is to prevent or, at least, delay nursing home placement. To meet that goal we provide an array of services on a daily basis including structured stimulating activities, nutritious meals, hands on assistance with personal care including bathing, social work services and skilled nursing care. But some of the most important work we do is providing respite for our family caregivers.

Most of the long term care provided in this state is provided by family members who have made a commitment to care for their loved ones at home as long as possible. Supporting these family caregivers should be a public policy priority since they are the backbone of our long term care system. Most family caregivers do not seek outside "formal" support, but research shows that approximately 14% will need professional assistance in order to keep their commitment to care at home. Since its inception, the PASSPORT program has provided that assistance to low income individuals and families.

PASSPORT provides for an individual's basic needs – eating, bathing, getting in and out of bed – these are not frivolous services. Since the majority of the individuals who use adult day services have a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, the PASSPORT program helps with a very basic need – safety. These individuals come to the center during the day while their family caregiver works – supporting the household without PASSPORT and adult day services, these committed family members would be faced with two options – leave their jobs or place their loved one in a nursing home. Clearly both of those decisions would have devastating effects on the individual, the family and, ultimately, Ohio tax payers.

The Governor's proposed budget includes several changes to the PASSPORT program that I fear will not achieve our State's goal of rebalancing our long term care system and could lead to a greater use of nursing home care. My greatest concern is the proposed cuts to the per member per month spending. I am unaware of any study that has shown PASSPORT consumers are "over serviced". In fact, PASSPORT costs are well under the cap determined by the Ohio

Department of Aging. As I mentioned earlier, the services a PASSPORT consumer receives are very basic services necessary to keep him or her safe, healthy and at home. What should be cut from a care plan – a hot, nutritious lunch, an aide to get a person out of bed and into their wheelchair, a bath? These cuts equate to real services that meet basic human needs. A loss in services would damage the intricately crafted care plan devised by the individual, the family and their case manager with its one overarching goal – keep the individual out of a nursing home.

Another part of this budget proposal includes a 3% cut to provider rates. I acknowledge that these are challenging times but I would submit to you that PASSPORT providers have always been challenged to provide quality care with reimbursements that lag far behind the cost of care. There is no doubt that we are losing providers in the system. One reason for our recent growth is due to other adult day centers closing. These were excellent centers with a history of providing quality care. Since 2000, PP providers have received a 6% increase in reimbursement. During that same 11 year time period the consumer price index has increased by 28.5%. You can understand how that discrepancy can create a business model that is almost impossible to sustain. Even though, Heritage Day Health Centers is arguably one of the most financially sound adult day care providers in the state we must raise significant philanthropic funds on an annual basis to balance our budget. The proposed cuts will have a devastating impact on our mission and those we serve. A loss in providers will jeopardize our entire home and community based system leading to an increased use in nursing home care.

These are challenging times but also exciting times – we have been presented with an opportunity to make real change in how long term care is provided in this state - and now is not the time for missteps in the pursuit of our goal to rebalance the system. Cuts to consumers care plans, reducing reimbursement to already underpaid providers and cuts to the AAAs who have been the leaders in the effort to create a viable home and community based care system seem counter intuitive and damaging at this juncture. I greatly appreciate your attention and concern about these issues and once again thank you for your attention.

I am happy to answer any questions.