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Dear Senator Beverly Gossage, Chair and members of the 2023 Special Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) Waiver,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the IDD Rate Study Interim Committee Hearing. My name is Molly Kennis and I am Mosaic's Vice President of Operations for Arizona, Colorado and Kansas. Mosaic is a nonprofit healthcare organization serving 5,000 people across 13 states in more than 700 communities. We help empower people with disabilities, mental and behavioral health needs and autism, as well as aging adults to live their best life. We primarily serve people in home and community services. In Kansas, we support over 650 people in service with over 300 members of our workforce (both employees and independent contractors).

As I reflect on my 30 years of supporting people with disabilities, I have never experienced the pure exhaustion and difficulty that our organization has now. Pre-pandemic, our turnover was averaging 45% and now, we average over 90% turnover in our group home and day services. We used to be able to find numerous high quality employees who were committed and reliable. Now, we are having to make difficult decisions of limiting or closing certain programs due to lack of staff available. I believe this is unacceptable and people should be able to choose from a variety of available services. The people we support count on you and providers like Mosaic to provide all the necessary services under the HCBS Waiver.

By supporting the IDD Rate Study, you are demonstrating to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Kansas that the following are important:

- High quality of services versus services that just address health and safety
- Engagement with their own community
- Quality of life for your constituents
- Continuity of care
- Less dependency on the government-funded programs by our workforce due to income stability

Mosaic is passionate about serving the whole person and partnering for quality outcomes. Yet without consistent rate increases to keep up with inflation and the uncertainty of if our rates will change, we are being forced to make the following difficult decisions:

- Deciding on which programs do we maintain vs which do we close
- Deciding what activities need to be limited due to lack of staff
- Hiring costly temporary staff which means increased training and frequently having a different person to support with their activities of daily living

- Due to lack of funding, there have been reductions of administrative structures and increased responsibilities for an already thin workforce

All these and more keep me up at night. With proper funding we could partner together to focus on some possible solutions including:

- Expansion of current programs, such as shared living, that are more personalized and based on national data, 74% decrease in emergency department visits.¹ Additionally, Mosaic's data demonstrates that less turnover due to the shared living model results in less instances of abuse and neglect and less injuries due to consistency of caregiver.
- Providing more flexibility in the service delivery model for day services through expanding who and where day services are provided.
- Implementing rate increases based on inflation will relieve the administrative burden of supervisors and administrative staff working shifts which will give them the capacity to ensure quality services are being delivered to those we support.

We are grateful for the 25% increase last year and we are starting to see some progress, yet it's not at the level we were hoping for. As we look to the future of services, we need to challenge ourselves to explore more flexible service delivery options that are cost effective for the state.

By providing more personalized services with an elevated reimbursement rate utilizing existing funds, it will help alleviate the DSP workforce crisis, increase continuity and consistency of care and decrease safety concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to share alternative solutions for the IDD Rate Study, which directly impacts people with IDD in Kansas.

I am available to partner with the committee as we move forward with solutions for the IDD rate study.

Sincerely,

Molly Kennis

Molly Kennis
Vice President of Operations for AZ, CO and KS
Mosaic

¹ *Friedman, C. (2021). Choosing Home: The Impact of Choosing Where to Live on People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities' Emergency Department Utilization.*