



BR Subcommittee on Human Resources

Capitol Annex, Room 129

February 27, 2019

### **Technology Assisted Waiver Supports**

- Thank you Chairman Bentley and committee members for the invitation to speak to you today. My name is Johnny Calles and I'm the Executive Director for the Kentucky Association of Private Providers (KAPP), a statewide association of providers for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- On behalf of our 110 member agencies across the Commonwealth, I'd like to take this opportunity to once again say Thank You to the committee members for voting to support the 10% SCL rate increase included in the state budget.
- This enabled providers to increase wages and benefits for Direct Support Professionals (DSP), who are the backbone of our home and community-based service system.
- With national DSP turnover rates hovering around 45% and some Kentucky providers experiencing turnover rates of 70% or more, we're hopeful the DSP wage increases will help curb a growing workforce crisis that seems to worsen every year.
- The Cabinet, legislature and families and individuals place their trust in providers to deliver quality services to people with disabilities in a financially responsible manner. Our members take this charge seriously and believe in bringing solutions to the table that will move Kentucky forward.
- Today I'm here to support the inclusion and promotion of technology assisted supports as a covered service for the Supports for Community Living waiver as it can benefit the individual, the provider and the state.
- Services such as remote monitoring, sensors, iPads, smartphones, smart speakers and apps can greatly increase independence for the person served when thoughtfully included in the person-centered support plan.

- The increased independence lessens the need for DSPs to be present at the home around the clock and can help ease the constant challenge of recruiting qualified staff. We're not going to be able to hire our way out of the workforce crisis so we need to pursue alternatives that are just as effective.
- The utilization of 24 hour care for the waiver population could be reduced, helping to control costs and enabling the Cabinet to stretch Medicaid dollars a little further.
- Currently, technology assisted residential is a covered service, but at a rate of \$79.00/day almost no providers offer the service and I'm aware of only three out of 4,700 SCL waiver participants who use it.
- We want to change that as part of the redesign process and have technology actively considered for every person's support plan. The Cabinet, providers and other stakeholders should encourage the use of technology assisted supports, not discourage it.
- Minnesota and Ohio have been proactive in pursuing technology assisted supports for people with disabilities. In 2018, Governor Kasich of Ohio issued an executive order establishing the Technology First Initiative.
- The order recognizes the benefits of technology assisted supports for the person and as a tool in reducing the need for the constant presence of direct support professionals. Perhaps just as important, it directs state government to "coordinate efforts to expand access to supportive technology designed to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities."
- Now is the perfect time for Kentucky to increase access to supportive technology for waiver participants as stakeholders take on the challenge of redesigning our system to better serve people with disabilities.
- Now, I'd like to turn it over to Brandon, Dustin and Nick to talk about some of the practical uses of technology and explain to the committee how it works in the lives of real people.