

## Public Testimony on the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Executive Budget Recommendation for the Department of Health and Human Services

March 9, 2021

Honorable Representative Mary Whiteford and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services:

My public testimony regarding the FY 2021-22 Executive Budget Recommendations follows.

As a director of a non profit organization that serves people with developmental disabilities, our greatest challenge has always been wages for direct care workers. As an agency that provides community living support services, we serve people with services from hard working people who must feel that the work is well reimbursed.

As it stands today, our starting pay for direct support professionals is \$11 per hour. With the Governor's Premium Pay during the pandemic, our starting pay is \$13 an hour and this has made all the difference to us. Prior to premium pay we had a difficult time hiring and retaining new direct support staff. Since April 2020 we have seen a steady stabilization of new hires and more importantly better rapport and morale for our long term staff who accepted the additional \$2 an hour gratefully.

Community Alliance stands in strong support of the budget recommendation to make permanent the Premium Pay for direct support professionals and to ensure the funds are a direct pass through to the worker. Please ensure the funds are protected for the purpose of paying direct care workers.

Thank you for all your hard work in Lansing. I am happy to speak with any committee member about my public testimony.

*Sincerely,  
Kathy Grant*

*Executive Director*

Community Alliance dba for

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*Mission and Vision Statements: By providing vital human services, Community Alliance mission is to support and empower persons with developmental disabilities to achieve life goals and maximize their independence. Our vision is to lead a change in our community that celebrates and supports the lives of people with developmental disabilities.*

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Recommendation for the Department of Health and Human Services

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Honorable Representative Mary Whiteford and the Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Health and Human Services:

I would like to you to encourage you and your committee to approve the \$2/hour increase to be paid directly to Direct Care Workers. The increase would send a positive message to the Direct Care Workers that they are valued and their hard work and dedication, especially during the difficult circumstances of this last year. The increase would also help with employee retention.

Sincerely,

Joanne Magee  
Retired Employee and Board Member  
Community Alliance

## Susan Frey

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**From:** Christina Cherry <ccherry@communityalliance.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 10, 2021 2:41 PM  
**To:** Susan Frey  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Executive Budget Recommendation for the Department of Health and Human Services

Honorable Representative Mary Whiteford and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services

I think that a permanent increase will be necessary because I have watched so many struggle this past year and the start of this year without the increase. I feel like we are helping not only ourselves but the community become stronger and able to help others who haven't been blessed to be able to keep their job in these terrible times. Also I think the increase can help get the economy back on track.

## Susan Frey

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**From:** Michele Benson <mbenson@communityalliance.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 10, 2021 1:20 PM  
**To:** Susan Frey  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Executive Budget Recommendation for the Department of Health and Human Services

Honorable Representative Mary Whiteford and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, I would like to take this opportunity to express the need for the permanent \$2.00 an hour for the direct care workers. I myself have been in the field for over 34 years, the job is very demanding but rewarding. This field has always not received much recognition for the work that is well desired to our employees. I hope the \$2 an hour will be heard and made permanent. Thank you!

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*Sincerely,*

*Michele Benson*

*Supported Living Program Coordinator*

*Community Alliance*

*Community Residence Corporation*

*Community Living Network*

*By providing vital human services, Community Alliance's mission is to support and empower persons with developmental disabilities to achieve life goals and maximize their independence. Community Alliance's vision is to lead a change in our community that celebrates and supports the lives of people with developmental disabilities. We value integrity; dignity and respect; transparency; compassion; fiscal responsibility and sustainability; independence and empowerment; inclusiveness; community engagement; heart; advocacy; choice; and rights.*

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