

3-16-22 Rosalie Austin

Hello, I am here to be the voice for my daughter and other children in our county and state with special needs. My daughter is now 29 years old and back home since Aug. 2021 after 2 disastrous placements in adult Specialized Residential placement. She has received CMH services since she was 6 years old beginning with respite only. At 12 years old she began Child Waiver due to her significant needs. She was one of approximately 400 slots in Michigan. They must meet the criteria of Intermediate Care Facility level of care. At age 18 she became Habilitation Supports Waiver. She is one of approximately 8000 Hab waiver recipients. Hab waiver is also to prevent institutionalization and keep people in their community and own home. I have learned in the last 2 years that my daughter has not received appropriate services.

For the last 17 years we have done mostly Self Directed Services. This year's Self Directed Services Technical Guide states Self D providers should receive the same rates as agency providers. The low rates to Self D providers contributed to my daughter's placement. It's hard to find, hire, and retain in-home staffing. At the time of placement I was unaware of the fact that all providers negotiate their rates. There is no standardized rate for Hab waiver providers. My daughter's estimated cost of services for placement in her second specialized residential was \$286,000 a year! A placement she barely survived with emotional trauma, choking incidents, and even a roll over motor vehicle accident. She again experienced systemic abuse and neglect. I found that complaints and advocacy=retaliation.

It is disappointing that very little is enforced in the contracts. There is little transparency in the Self D budgeting process. I am amazed at how fragmented the "system" is. The variance in available services by location and county of residency make it nearly impossible for guardians to care for their children with special needs. My daughter has been home with approved 24/7 staffing. I am struggling to find adequate staffing due to low rates. My daughter has experienced extreme regression in all her skills. I am at square one. She was toilet trained, now she is basically incontinent. She was able to feed herself with supervision, now we have to relearn self feeding. She has lost social skills. She is extremely aggressive. Her staff deserve combat pay. Meanwhile group homes receive enhanced rates for difficulty of care. Our saving grace preplacement was ISD school. The structure, routine, consistent staff and skilled professionals implementing PT, OT, Speech helped beyond measure. Now I am told my daughter doesn't qualify for a day program. I would like a PACE type program developed for high support needs individuals with challenging behaviors that age out of ISDs.

I would like actual budget authority and flexibility to utilize the Self D individualized budget as I believe the Self D Technical guide intends with the same rates as the last agency placement. My daughter deserves quality care in her own home with equitable rates as an agency to hire and retain staff with the training and skills needed for her to live her best life. I do not think she would survive another placement outside our own home.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalie Austin  
457 W. 21<sup>st</sup>  
Holland MI 49423  
616-405-9792