



The Honorable Rick Billinger
Chairman
Senate Ways and Means Committee
Via Email Nancy.Fontaine@Senate.KS.gov

Re: Senate Bill 154 - Increasing Reimbursement Rates for Providers of HCBS under the IDD Waiver

Dear Chairman Billinger,

On behalf of ResCare Community Living of Kansas, we write to you in support of Senate Bill 154. ResCare is part of the family of brands of BrightSpring Health Services, the nation's leading provider of home and community-based services for high-need and medically complex populations. Throughout Kansas, the collective brands of BrightSpring provide service to more than 3,600 Kansans through a workforce of over 600 direct care, administrative, and pharmacy staff.

ResCare Community Living provides 24-7 residential service and day programming to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our direct care workforce has operated on the frontlines delivering critical supports and services to the state's most vulnerable populations including individuals with intellectual disabilities. This care has resulted in our current infection rate remaining less than one-half of the country's general population infection rate.

This effort however has not been without challenges in Kansas. Since the beginning of COVID, providers have continued to experience a workforce crisis, evident by the more than 150 staffing vacancies our organization faces statewide. Providers also continue to absorb increases in unplanned costs associated with overtime and the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used to ensure our front-line workforce and clients are properly protected.

As you consider numerous policy and budget priorities this session, we understand and appreciate the difficult decisions you have in front of you. We respectfully ask for your support of Senate Bill 154, a key measure to assist the IDD community's continued response to COVID-19.

Funding appropriated by SB 154 is needed to stabilize both the IDD provider network and the direct care workforce. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, providers have experienced increased staff turnover, recruitment and retention challenges, as well as the aforementioned increased PPE and overtime costs. The funds appropriated by SB 154 would help address these costs over time and we ask for your support. Of utmost importance, the multi-year funding will help us to attract and retain direct care staff who are committed to quality care of the individuals we serve.

Thank you for your consideration and all you continue to do in response to the pandemic.

Tom Keil
Executive Director
ResCare Community Living

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ResCare Community Living

Letha Farwell
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