

Testimony for House Social Services Hearing  
February 12, 2020

Greetings, I am Deb Voth, President of Rainbows United, Inc. in Wichita. I am writing to urge your approval of the House Bill 2550. **I have a powerful statistic to show how urgent these rate increases are needed. We estimate that Rainbows is NOT able to provide a minimum of 6,000 hours of Personal Care Services annually that families request of us and need because of an inability to hire a sufficient number of staff, as I will explain in a moment. The 6,000 hours is 13% more hours than the 48,000 hours Rainbows is currently providing annually.**

Rainbows provides Personal Care Services (PCS) which are designed to assist individuals with developmental disabilities in their homes and community settings. PCS focuses on assistance with Activities of Daily Living and general supervision. Personal Care Services is also referred to as Supportive Home Care (SHC) in the Intellectual/Developmentally Delayed (I/DD) Home and Community Based Service Medicaid Waiver.

Participants authorized for Personal Care Services have the option to “Agency-Direct” or “Self-Direct” their approved hours of services. Rainbows utilizes the “Agency-Directed” model which means we are responsible for hiring, billing for services, and all related employee/employer requirements. We currently provide PCS to 154 children and youth, ages 5 to 21. This is 26% of those served in Sedgwick County through the Agency-Directed model.

Rainbows provides approximately 48,000 hours of Personal Care Services annually. On average a child receives 20 to 25 hours a week of Personal Care Services. It generally takes 2 to 3 staff to meet the approved hours of one individual.

As I stated at the beginning, we estimate that Rainbows is NOT able to provide a minimum of 6,000 hours of Personal Care Services annually that families request of us and need because of an inability to hire a sufficient number of staff, mainly because of the low wages we are able to offer.

Rainbows employs 157 Direct Support Providers (DSP), most of whom are part-time, for 9 months a year. We add more than 40 staff in the summer (June through August) to meet the needs of families when school is not in session.

After more than 10 years of no reimbursement rate increase, we have had 3 years of rate increases (total of 8.5%) for Agency Directed Personal Care Services under the I/DD Waiver. The rate is now \$3.34 per 15-minute unit. A billable unit is only when the individual served is receiving direct supervision from a DSP. There is no reimbursement for documentation or travel time, the cost of travel, required trainings, or other supports that may be needed such as nurses, buses for community outings, etc.

Challenges in finding staff to meet individuals' needs include:

- Wage Rate - The hourly pay rate Rainbows is able to offer is not a rate that attracts individuals to this field.
- Aggressive Behaviors - When the child or youth has aggressive behaviors towards others or themselves, it is extremely difficult to find staff who are confident and comfortable providing services in the home. It is vital to find staff with the experience and skill set to meet the child or youth's needs. Staff are often injured while caring for these individuals.
- Medical Needs - Our staff are trained in CPR, but when the medical needs are high we have staff who are not comfortable and are not able to meet the child or youth's needs.
- Home Environment or Neighborhood - Some of the families live in poor conditions or in neighborhoods where staff are not comfortable providing care.

In Sedgwick County, 602 individuals are currently using Agency-Directed Personal Care Services. In addition, in Sedgwick County, 747 individuals are waiting for funding for Personal Care Services. There are only 2 Agency-Directed providers in Sedgwick County. Rainbows serves children/youth and the other agency serves primarily adults.

Providers of any Waiver service are required to do 10 different background checks per individual at a cost of \$35.00 per employee. In addition, Rainbows is also required to fingerprint each of these employees, per Child Care licensing, at a cost of \$50.00 per employee

Of the 7 HCBS Waivers in Kansas, 5 of them have Personal Care Services with the same definition for all 5. However, the I/DD Waiver rate is the lowest of all. The Physical Disability rate is the closest and it is 6% higher than the I/DD rate. The FY2020 unit rate of \$3.34 per 15-minute unit for Personal Care Services through I/DD Waiver to the other 4 Waivers is:

- 6% less than Physically Disabled Waiver rate at \$3.55 per unit
- 10% less than Traumatic Brain Injury rate at \$3.68 per unit
- 39% less than Technology Assisted Waiver rate at \$4.63 per unit
- 10% less than Frail and Elderly Waiver Level 1 rate at \$3.68 per unit
- 21% less than Frail and Elderly Waiver Level 2 rate at \$4.06 per unit
- 35% less than Frail and Elderly Waiver Level 3 rate at \$4.49 per unit

As you can see, there is a large discrepancy from the Personal Care Services rate reimbursement in the I/DD Waiver and the rates for the other 4 Medicaid Waivers. I support House Bill 2550 and urge you to approve it. In addition, I request that the rate for PCS be increased to be more in line with the rates of the other Waivers with the very service definition.

Thank you.

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