

SB 173

Written testimony

By Alice Lackey

Nemaha County Training Center Inc.

Provided to Senate Ways and Means Committee

March 7th 10:30am

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding SB 173(5% increase in rates HCBS IDD services).

I am providing this testimony to help you understand the ongoing crisis situation of service provision in North east Kansas and across the state as well.

The Nemaha County Training Center is a private not for profit community based service provider for individuals who are affected by Developmental disabilities. NCTC was organized in 1975 and has been meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities sense that time. The majority of the work that NCTC does is done by direct support staffs who work directly with the individuals served. In order to provide quality services NCTC must be able to attract and retain staff. In the past several years NCTC has fallen in its ability to attract and retain. Nemaha County has the lowest unemployment rate in the state and NCTC has not been successful in competing with the other employers in the area. The reimbursement rate for service provision has not been significantly increased for the last 9 years while the cost of providing the services has significantly increased. Without a significant rate increase we can't pay competitive salary and benefits.

The provision of residential service is where we struggle the most in finding and keeping staff. Keep in mind that the services that we offer are provided 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

I cannot remember the last time that we were fully staffed in direct services. In the past 12 months we paid over \$28,000.00 in overtime costs just trying to keep services going. This does not include the incentive pay \$17,000.00 that we had to resort to, to get day staff to help on the residential side. We were not able sustain the incentive pay and had to cease paying it. In doing so day staff stopped helping.

We budget for staff training so we can equip staff with the knowledge they need to provide quality care but we can't find coverage to free them up to attend the training.

We frequently resort to administrative and management level staff to cover which makes it hard for them to do their job.

Things are so bad that we have had individuals with funding come to us requesting services only for us to turn them away for the lack of staff to support them

At this point in time our situation feels like that line of dominoes set to fall with just the least little flick of the finger. It truly is hard to sleep at night with this worry on my mind.

I am asking for you to take this critical situation seriously and pass it out of committee.

Thank you

Alice Lackey

Executive Director

Nemaha County Training Center Inc.