



DD Comprehensive Care: Update on Emergency

Turnover in the DD Comprehensive system is 65% and other costs are continuing to escalate; these facts, combined with increasing needs of an aging DD population are breaking the back of the DD Comprehensive System.

- DD Comprehensive care is the only one of the three legs of Oregon's long-term care system that has had no fiscal relief in recent years. Nursing homes have added a provider tax and can cost shift to private payers and Home Health Care workers have received substantial pay and benefit increases in the last two biennia. **The DD Comprehensive System received only \$.06 per hour.** State employees performing the same jobs received a 9% increase to their compensation package.
- The DD Comprehensive System does **not allow for provider taxes or cost shifting to private payers.**
- For 22 years ('79-'01), Oregon law funded 75% of the cost of workers' compensation for DD Comprehensive providers from the Handicapped Workers Reserve. When this law was repealed in 2001, it resulted in a \$7 million/year increase in costs; **this cost was not made up by a rate increase – it was passed on to providers.**
- Concurrent with the loss of the workers compensation rebate, the state **stopped funding COLA for four years ('01-'05)** even as health care, insurance, energy and other costs increased dramatically.
- **DD Comprehensive Services often provide lifetime care for over 3000 Oregonians. As individuals age, their physical, mental and social support needs increase faster than their chronological peers; people with severe disabilities age more rapidly and with more complications than people who do not have developmental disabilities.**
- Fairview closed in 1999; the Legislature saw that community providers became the core of Oregon's mandated services for people with Developmental Disabilities. The Legislature also recognized that caring for these people would require paraprofessional skills and **promised to maintain wages significantly above minimum wage** to attract and retain competent employees. Community providers have kept their commitment to serve these individuals, but the state has not kept its promise to fund us at a competitive rate.
- **Minimum wage increases again in January of 2007** by 2% or more (2005-2.6% and 2004 2.3%). This brings minimum wage within \$1.42 of \$9.07 paid by the State and makes it very difficult to hire and retain workers for this difficult and demanding work.

Human services in Oregon have suffered from funding problems resulting from the poor economy. **The DD Comprehensive System suffers disproportionately and in fact has made huge financial contributions toward its own survival. If this system were to fail and the state would be forced to continue to provide services for these 3000 individuals. At the rate of pay currently paid to state workers, the wage differential alone would be \$200,000,000 a biennium.**