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July 11, 2023

To: I/DD community members, Tribal partners and ODDS staff

From: Anna S. Lansky, Interim Director, Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS)

Subject: Update on Senate Bill 91 implementation

The Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 91 (SB 91), which directs the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) to apply for federal approval for a permanent program to pay parents as caregivers. This program is specifically for caregivers of minor children who are assessed as having very high medical needs or very high behavioral needs.

There was a temporary program to meet this need during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). That program allowed parents the option to be a paid caregiver to reduce the number of outside caregivers coming into their homes. That program ended with the PHE on May 11, 2023.

ODDS administered that program in Oregon, which served about 450 children during the pandemic.

Many parents advocated to Oregon legislators for the program to continue. For that to happen, ODDS needed legislative approval and funding. This bill provides approximately \$3 million of state funds every two years (which will be matched by approximately twice that amount of federal funds) for ODDS to operate the program.

Please note, **there is no short-term “bridge” program** available to allow parents from the temporary program to resume working for their minor children. The legislature did not fund such a program. We understand the end of this program has been unsettling and disruptive to some families who came to depend on it. ODDS is moving quickly to create a permanent program.

We need the input of parents and advocates in the creation of this program. ODDS will work with Oregon Tribes and community partners to gather input. This will happen at the same time as ODDS works on the application for federal authority. We know parents are anxious for this program to begin. **ODDS expects the program to be available to families in mid-2024** if the federal government approves the application.

Here is a general timeline of what to expect:

1. ODDS will hold meetings with parents and other interested parties around August 2023. This will help ODDS develop the waiver application and draft rules.
2. A 30-day public comment and 60-day Tribal consultation period will open once the application is complete.

3. The final application will be sent to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) by December 31, 2023. This will include ODDS responses to all feedback from the public comment period.
4. Negotiations with CMS and federal approval is expected to happen in the first half of 2024.
5. If approved, the program will launch around mid-2024.

ODDS encourages parents to contact your case management entities (CMEs) with questions or requests for resources to help you navigate this transition. ODDS is working with CMEs on the planning and selection of services and supports for individuals and families.

More information about this bill and other legislation that passed during the 2023 session will be shared through these ODDS director's messages as it becomes available. There will also be updates on the [ODDS Engagement and Innovation](#) webpage for updates about meetings and other developments.

We are grateful for your patience and participation as ODDS works to develop a valuable program to support Oregon families.

Sincerely,



Anna S. Lansky  
Interim Director

## Office of Developmental Disabilities Services

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