



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 9, 2018

Elisa Williams  
Communications Officer  
Aging and People with Disabilities  
Oregon Department of Human Services  
[Elisa.A.Williams@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:Elisa.A.Williams@dhsosha.state.or.us)  
Direct: [503-945-6410](tel:503-945-6410)  
Mobile: [503-509-9604](tel:503-509-9604)

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Elizabeth Seaberry  
Communications Specialist  
Disability Rights Oregon  
Email: [eseaberry@droregon.org](mailto:eseaberry@droregon.org)  
Phone: 503.243.2081  
Mobile: 503.444.0026

## **DHS will temporarily restore cuts to services that help older Oregonians & people with disabilities live independently**

**Portland, Oregon**—The Department of Human Services Aging and People with Disabilities program (APD) today announced that they had reached an agreement with Disability Rights Oregon, Legal Aid Services of Oregon and the Oregon Law Center that will restore long-term care hours and benefits to older adults and adults with disabilities who lost benefits due to program and rule changes last summer and fall. APD will contact consumers impacted. In addition, the agreement calls for additional discussions about a permanent plan for the program.

Thousands of Oregonians with physical disabilities or older Oregonians wish to live independently, but need help meeting their daily care needs. APD's in-home services make it possible for these individuals to safely stay in their homes, and APD's long-term care residential services make it possible for many Oregonians to live in a home-like residential setting and get the care they need. Long-term care is generally not covered by traditional health insurance or Medicare.

Currently, 35,000 older Oregonians and Oregonians with disabilities receive long-term care services through APD, including over 18,000 who receive services in their own homes. About 5,000 people may be impacted by the agreement. APD will send letters to impacted consumers no later than February 23, 2018.

In 2017, APD implemented changes that resulted in reduced service hours for many Oregonians, and a loss of eligibility for services for some. While APD and the advocates

negotiate future standards and procedures for in-home and residential care, the agreement will pause these changes and temporarily restore most consumers to their prior level of care. People who lost live-in services as of July 27, 2017, and people who lost eligibility or in-home hours as of September 30, 2017 will have their benefits restored while APD and the advocates discuss future standards.

The agreement between APD, Disability Rights Oregon, Legal Aid Services of Oregon and the Oregon Law Center provides for more time to communicate with consumers about:

- An individual's rights in seeking services;
- Eligibility criteria;
- How to request exceptions when a consumer feels their service plan is insufficient to meet their needs.

"Change is always difficult, but it can be particularly daunting for older adults and people with disabilities who depend on well-coordinated long-term services and supports," said Ashley Carson Cottingham, director of the Aging and People with Disabilities program. "Our program shares a common goal with the Oregon Law Center, Disability Rights Oregon and Legal Aid Services of Oregon to ensure that consumers are aware of all their options and rights to meet their long-term care needs."

"When older Oregonians and people with physical disabilities live in their own homes, they enjoy greater independence and self-determination. Temporarily restoring these vital in-home care services means that thousands of people with disabilities and older Oregonians will have a voice in their care," said Tom Stenson, litigation attorney for Disability Rights Oregon. "This agreement is a promising first step toward finding a way to protect these crucial services that make a difference in the lives of thousands of Oregonians."

**Additional Resources:**

[Term Sheet and Standstill Agreement](#)

**About Disability Rights Oregon**

Disability Rights Oregon upholds the civil rights of people with disabilities to live, work, and engage in the community. The nonprofit works to transform systems, policies, and practices to give more people the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. For 40 years, the organization has served as Oregon's Protection & Advocacy system.