

NEWSLETTER

LIZ HOLLE SPEAKS AT THE CAPITOL



On January 29th and 30th, Liz Holle, president and CEO of Big Lakes, spoke before the Kansas House Social Services Budget Committee and the Senate Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee, urging lawmakers to approve a 10% increase for the IDD waiver and support workforce capacity across Kansas.

Holle highlighted a growing workforce crisis threatening continuity of care. Big Lakes has openings to the equivalent of 40 full-time positions, and employees are routinely working numerous hours of overtime per week. Many of our management staff are covering evening, weekend, overnight shifts, and also still trying to lead programs. "This is not sustainable," Holle said.

Unlike other industries facing staffing shortages, such as the postal services, care for individuals with IDD cannot be paused or delayed. Staff provide critical services, including assistance with eating, bathing, and medication administration. Holle brought up the positive impact of a 2022 Medicaid rate increase, which allowed Big Lakes to raise wages. However, inflation has since erased those gains.



She also cautioned the efforts to reduce the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiting list, as it will not succeed without workforce capacity. Big Lakes currently has 75 individuals with funding that cannot receive services due to staffing shortages, creating an "invisible wait list". She explained, "the same staff needed to deliver the new community support waiver services are the same staff we cannot hire today."

She concluded with a heartfelt appeal to lawmakers. "The people we serve cannot advocate for themselves. They are relying on us to do so. I respectfully ask you to protect system capacity by investing in the workforce that makes community support services possible. Thank you."

You can watch Liz Holle speak by scanning the QR codes below.



Kansas House Social Services Budget Committee

Skip ahead to 1:36:30 to hear Liz Holle speak.

Senate Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee

Skip ahead to 37:30 to hear Liz Holle speak.



FATUMA'S RETIREMENT

At the end of January, we celebrated the retirement of our beloved nurse, Fatuma. She has been an integral part of the Big Lakes family for over 28 years and is known by clients and staff alike as compassionate, hardworking, and caring.



ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

At the end of each year, Big Lakes launches an Annual Giving Campaign to strengthen our mission and continue connecting to our donors. This year, we introduced our Big Improvement Campaign and raised an amazing \$61,738! These funds will go toward essential maintenance and home improvements in our residential homes. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated.



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

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