

## Dear Self-advocates, Families and Friends of Morrow DD,

These are challenging times as we all are well aware, and it is certainly so for those with developmental disabilities, their families, caretakers and service providers. Today, this message brings with it an urgent request for help to all community members. Please take a few minutes of your time to read and personally reflect on this message. We believe the information is vital and worth your time!

Throughout the year, we share information through newsletters and social media like Facebook so our community can have a glimpse of the challenges individuals and families face every day, and so everyone knows just how important DD services and supports are. We need each of you to become an ally, a valuable friend of Morrow DD, to share our information with each of your contacts, especially during these challenging times. Why? Spreading awareness in our communities is important because county boards in Ohio rely on local property tax revenue to ensure that necessary funding is available for those who need our services. We must have sufficient local matching funds to access Medicaid funding which is needed to pay for the residential services provided by direct support professionals and provider agencies in our community, to ensure Early Intervention services for young children, to ensure Adult Services, whether in the community or in facilities like Whetstone Industries, as well as to continue the county board operations like service coordination, transportation, and health and safety investigations. We can bring these state and federal funds back to Morrow County, but not without adequate local matching funds. This has been our challenge for nearly 20 years and why so many individuals and families must wait for supports! Each county in Ohio gets to decide the level of supports available to its community members by voting on levy requests.

**As many of you know, we had great hope for the general election but unfortunately due to the unusual circumstances of the election and the COVID-19 pandemic, we lost our levy request by less than 2 %. As we must face another attempt in 2021, we know communication is essential so:**

- ✓ people who truly want our community to provide the supports that are desperately needed and available in other counties understand the importance of being a registered voter,
- ✓ voters have all the information they need to be able to make an informed decision and
- ✓ self-advocates and their families know they can rely on their community when they need support, now and in the future.

Why does Morrow DD need this funding now? Our funding was greatly reduced when we lost levy renewals in 2001 and 2002, forever removing those funds from our local tax revenue. Morrow DD's levy millage remains below average for similar sized counties. The loss of funding has compounded for nearly 20 years and has greatly reduced the services Morrow DD can provide.



We simply cannot expend funds we do not have or cannot access, which means we reluctantly must make difficult decisions over who has the most urgent need and who must wait. In the past few years, this means we have been barely able to address emergency situations, like when an individual has lost their caretaker and faces being homeless. We want to support the very real and significant needs of county residents who should be able to rely on us, but we need your help.

### **This levy is vital to meet the lifelong needs of county residents. Morrow DD needs these funds to:**

- » sustain and expand community and residential supports and services
- » maintain locally funded Early Intervention services
- » provide transition services and supports for students and young adults, ages 14-22
- » increase support of school-age children and families, especially those with complex needs and
- » meet the diverse needs of the adult population

### **What does the levy mean to people currently receiving services?**

Local funds received through county levies are needed to provide the supports people receive. For those whose services are funded through Medicaid waivers, the county board funds approximately 40% of the cost, which goes to the state to pay the service providers. For those without waivers, the county board generally provides 100% of the cost. Without the county board's share, providers would not get paid, which could result in many people going without the supports they need. This levy is critical to ensure current services are maintained.

### **What does the levy mean to people currently waiting for services or who will have a future need?**

Local funds sustain county board operations and allow the county to plan for the future need for supports. We know that as adults and their caregivers age, there will be a greater need to rely on the county board. We also know that the number of children and families who will need our services is also increasing. No family is risk-free. We know lives can change through an early birth, an accident, an insect bite, a seizure, and countless other ways. This levy is vital for the future of individuals and families who will need Morrow DD to be there when they need supports.

### **How can our community help?**

It is important for our community to understand that county boards are restricted regarding levy campaigns and can only do those activities that seek to inform our community members with the facts regarding our services and the details related to the levy request. County board employees





are prohibited from using county board resources which also include employees' worktime for promotional activities. That is why a separate group must coordinate any promotional efforts regarding our levy campaign. That group is Morrow Abilities Partners, or MAP for short.

Who is MAP? MAP is a small but growing group of concerned citizens that was formed to promote the social welfare of individuals in Morrow County with developmental disabilities, and who coordinates the promotion of our levy. MAP needs your help and you can contact them through their Facebook page. They need your help to share information, to make levy signs for your home and/or business, and they need your help to raise sufficient funds to promote this levy.

### **What will happen now that the November 2020 levy failed?**

A failed levy in 2020 means we will not receive new local funds for Morrow DD in 2021. It means that we will continue to fall short in meeting the needs of Morrow County citizens who need our supports because we must operate within the funds available. So that means that waiting lists will continue to grow and service reduction planning will continue.

### **Where can you find more information about Morrow DD?**

Please check out our website, [MorrowDD.com](http://MorrowDD.com) and you can find us on Facebook too. We are also just a phone call away, 419-947-1159 or 419-947-9222. Morrow DD is critical to individuals and vital for their future. We need your help in sharing the reasons why!

Respectfully,  
Nancy Foglesong  
Superintendent

