

# independence | northwest

29 May 2008

Dear Base Plus Customer,

You are receiving this letter because you currently receive the highest funding level available through Support Services Brokerage programs. The reason you receive this increased level of funding is because it has been determined (through the “Base Plus” process) that you have exceptional need for someone receiving Brokerage services.

In October of this year, a couple of things are changing and they may affect your services.

- **The majority of Brokerage customers will receive a 10% increase to their current benefit level.**
- **The Oregon Department of Human Services will increase the Provider Rate Ranges by 10%, allowing providers statewide to raise their rates as of October 1<sup>st</sup>.**

One major benefit of the increase is to allow providers to increase their rates as necessary to ensure proper wages for staff and to keep up with the cost of living increases here in the Portland metro area. Providers statewide must adhere to the same range of rates, regardless of whether they perform service in downtown Portland or in a small, rural town in eastern Oregon. The unintended consequence of the 10% increase is that it may mean a reduction in services for people like you who are receiving the highest funding level and have demonstrated the greatest need for Brokerage services.

**Per direction from the Oregon Department of Human Services, your funding level will not be increased by 10% because you are at the top of the amount available for brokerage customers.** Brokerages statewide have advocated for the increase to include everyone, regardless of their benefit level, but we have been informed by the State that it will take a legislative change in order to facilitate such a change. Any change of this sort is highly unlikely between now and the October 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 implementation date.

We will continue with advocacy efforts, but it's important at this time that you research your options and begin planning for an adjustment, if necessary. Since your providers *may* increase their rates, this could *potentially* mean a loss in services for you. This is especially true if you are currently budgeted all the way "at the top" of your current benefit level.

The Oregon Department of Human Services has stated that this change does not meet the criteria for a Fair Hearing. However, you have the right to file a Complaint with the Department of Human Services over this decision. Your Personal Agent will be able to assist you in this process. We have included a copy of a formal Complaint Form with this letter.

**Your Personal Agent will be able to assist you with a better understanding of your unique situation and how affected (if at all) you might be by this change. Please contact her/him at your earliest convenience so you can make an informed decision about your services moving forward.**

Note: *This does not affect your eligibility for COLAs (Cost of Living Adjustments) such as the 2.1% increase occurring in July of this year. You will receive the 2.1% like all other Brokerage customers.*