April 26, 2020

Dear Committee Members:

NAMI Minnesota strongly supports providing an additional one-time payment of $500 to MFIP families. The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly harsh to families living in poverty. Children are not in school and therefore costs for food and other items have increased. Some families have not been able to continue mental health treatment for their children due to having limited minutes on their phones or not having access to computers, smart phones or any phones at all. While most of us are experiencing anxiety during this time of great uncertainty, these families are feeling it even more. The strain of trying to teach children at home, food and housing insecurity all lead to increasing anxiety and depression among these families. This one-time payment will help greatly.

We also support the proposed changes to the PCA program, most notably increasing the number of hours per month a PCA can work and allowing family members to provide and be paid for delivering PCA services to a loved one. This flexibility is needed as it becomes increasingly difficult to find people to come into someone’s home to provide these services. The temporary rate increase will also help these workers who are placing themselves at risk of catching the coronavirus.

Thank you for your continuing work to address the needs of children and adults who rely on our social service system to live in the community.

Sincerely,

Sue Abderholden, MPH

Executive Director

NAMI Minnesota

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