



Accessible Space, Inc.

22 March 2022

Dear Rep. Schultz & Members of the House Human Services Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the residents and staff of Accessible Space, Inc. (ASI) in support of HF 4447.

ASI is a Minnesota nonprofit that provides customized living services to adults with significant physical disabilities. It has been our mission since 1978 to serve low-income adults with disabilities in a way that provides them the greatest degree of self-reliance and independence. Our 24/7 model of service allows residents to live in their own apartments with on-site assistance at hand – at a fraction of the cost of nursing home placement.

All our residents are Medical Assistance (MA) eligible and use the CADI or BI waivers to fund their services. As such, we do not have the mix of private pay or other third-party payers to help cover the balance out the low MA reimbursement. In recent years, we have struggled to continue to provide these critical services to our residents throughout Minnesota. However, with rising costs of staffing and other operating expenses, and no increase in our reimbursement rate in the past eight years, we are simply unable to continue. In the past few years, we have shuttered facilities in Minneapolis, Rochester, Saint Cloud, and Saint Paul. Presently, we are preparing to end services to our residents in Bloomington and Champlain and our services in Duluth are also in jeopardy due to insufficient reimbursement.

We fully support the goals of HF 4447 to provide Workforce Incentive Fund Grants, as well as the increase MA reimbursement via the rate-phase in and service rate updates. We also applaud the adoption of the rate calculations and wage updates. These changes cannot come soon enough for ASI and our residents. Our residents are so very vulnerable and now they live in fear of the loss of their services.

Previous legislation has overlooked or carved out the services offered to adults with physical disabilities living in customized living settings, resulting in very disparate reimbursement for identical diagnoses and service plans. Anything that can be done to remedy the disparate funding of services for adults living outside of group homes or ICFs would be welcomed and supported.

On behalf of all of our staff and residents, we thank you all for bringing this legislation forward and ask for the support of the full Legislature for this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Loriann Sarafolean Granados".

Loriann Sarafolean Granados, MA, SHRM-SCP
Director of Human Resources

4890-8435-5352, v. 4