

House Human Services Finance Committee

Chair Mohamud Noor

March 14th, 2023

HF 1067 Allow PCAs to drive clients - Hanson

Dear Chair Noor and members of the Committee,

The Minnesota Council on Disability urges you to support HF 1067 improve community access for Minnesotans with disabilities.

This policy change would allow personal care assistants (PCAs) to include driving their clients as an allowable service during approved PCA hours. Currently PCA's are not authorized to drive clients and must clock-out and drive on their personal time if they would like to offer to drive clients to the grocery store, medical appointments, or other community events. We believe this restricts community access for people with disabilities who rely on this service and creates redundancies in services by forcing people with disabilities to use other waivers and services for transportation while also being assisted by a PCA.

Restricting PCAs' ability to transport clients directly contradicts the principles set forth by the Minnesota Olmstead Plan, adopted by the State of Minnesota in response to a legal settlement in 2011. The Olmstead Plan states that people with disabilities are entitled to live, learn, work, participate in their communities and enjoy life in the most integrated setting possible. Allowing PCAs the option of transporting clients is key to ensuring that all people with disabilities can participate fully in their communities

The Minnesota Council on Disability supports these provisions because any policy that helps Minnesotans with disabilities integrate themselves into their own communities is a top priority. Minnesotans with disabilities trust their PCAs and develop strong relationships with them, so there is no better person to provide that transportation opportunity as part of their regular day-to-day activities. We also like to emphasize that these provisions are not a mandate and is strictly volunteer for both the client and the PCA. These provisions do not increase approved PCA hours for the client and does not increase liability for the department of Human Services. These provisions simply give clearances to those PCAs and their clients who have developed a trusted relationship with each other, to drive together to the client's regular errands, medical appointments, and community activities.

Thank you, members of the Committee, for your support of the Restoring Community Access to the PCA Program HF 1067 and your support of the disability community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Trevor Turner'.

Trevor Turner

Public Policy Director

Minnesota Council on Disability