



February 22, 2023

The Honorable Peter Fischer
Chair, Human Services Policy Committee
Minnesota House
551 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Debra Kiel
Republican Lead, Human Services Policy Committee
Minnesota House
203 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 1384 – Reform of Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD)

Dear Chair Fischer, Representative Kiel, and Members of the Committee,

Legal Aid writes to express its support for HF 1384. This bill would allow more Minnesotans with disabilities to work, and continue working, without making choices between their premiums and other necessities and eliminating an asset limit that has not been adjusted since the program's inception more than 20 years ago.

For MA-EPD recipients and applicants, premiums create an unnecessary barrier and hardship. In 2021, there were 10,710 Minnesota enrolled in MA-EPD with an average income of \$983 per month, if the person was employed in competitive, integrated employment, and \$551 per month, if the person had an employer who is a provider. Minnesotans with disabilities are charged premiums for a crucial program which is needed to receive home- and community-based services needed to get to work and live independently. Even if a disabled person receives health care benefits through their employers, home- and community-based waived services are not covered by the majority of these plans. Eliminating the asset limit would bring this program for Minnesotans with disabilities in line with other similar programs. For example, Minnesota does not have Medical Assistance premiums for children, parents, single adults, or pregnant people.

Eliminating the asset limit will allow more working Minnesotans to save for emergencies and plan for their futures rather than requiring them to stay in a financially precarious situation in order to get the supports they need. It would eliminate disparate treatment for these individuals as compared to Minnesotans receiving other program services. In addition, we believe that much of the cost of these changes will be offset by changing the renewal period from six months to 12 months and not requiring the Department of Human Services to calculate and collect premiums as well as monitor asset limits.

Thank you for allowing Legal Aid to share its views on this proposal. We urge passage of HF 1384.

Sincerely,

Ellen Smart
Staff Attorney