



February 6, 2023

Chair Fischer and Committee Members,

The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD) is a broad coalition of over 30 advocacy and provider organizations along with individual members, working to change public policy to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

We are writing in support of House File 716, the bill that will expand shared services and make needed improvements to the Individualized Home Supports with Training (IHST) service. We also want to thank Rep. Finke for authoring this bill.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, we heard far too many stories of people with disabilities struggling to remain in their own homes due to inadequate staffing or unnecessary barriers in accessing our in-home service system. As you may know, the pandemic only made things worse. Our coalition is concerned that the decades of work to ensure people with disabilities have the informed choice to live in their own homes is at tremendous risk due to the direct care workforce crisis.

HF 716 would give us another tool to address the direct care staffing crisis through expanding shared services. People should have the choice to live in a home with a friend, roommate, partner, family member and share services instead of having to manage multiple service providers. This would be a cost-saving workforce crisis solution that uses less staff to support multiple people without sacrificing the individuals' autonomy and ability to truly access the community. Additionally, addressing inequities or inflexibilities for the IHST service will improve the service and make it more accessible to people living in their own homes. IHST is a critical service that supports many Minnesotans with disabilities and is often key in ensuring they have stable housing and supports.

We ask for your support for HF 716.

Thank you,

Julia Page, MNCCD Policy Co-Chair

Trevor Turner, MNCCD Policy Co-Chair