



March 2, 2021

Dear Chair Schultz and Members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee,

We write on behalf of the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD), a broad coalition of over 30 advocacy and provider organizations working to improve the lives of people with disabilities. We write to express our support of HF 1431, the Reinstate Community Access for the PCA Program Bill, and we wish to thank Rep. Frederick for authoring this important legislation.

People with disabilities who receive Personal Care Assistance (PCA) under the Medical Assistance (MA) program should be able to have their PCAs drive them within the guidelines of Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL).

Currently, PCAs are allowed to accompany clients when they go to medical appointments, work and other activities in the community, but are **not** allowed to bill for their time spent driving them. This makes it challenging for people who use PCAs to access needed transportation to things like work, appointments, or grocery shopping. It also creates added challenges for PCAs, who risk incurring penalties if they are not “clocked out” while driving a client. This is an added complication for PCAs at a time when there is a workforce crisis. The requirement to “clock out” goes against Department of Labor requirements, meaning the provider must pay for the time the PCA is driving, but is unable to bill, putting further strain on providers. Driving time can be billed for people who receive services through one of the Home and Community-Based Waivers, but not currently for the PCA program.

Under Minnesota’s Olmstead Plan, adopted by the State of Minnesota in response to a legal settlement in 2011, 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.

Allowing PCAs to transport clients:

- promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in community,
- is not prohibited by federal policy;
- would avoid clients transferring to more costly waiver services, solely for the purpose of accessing a transportation service; and
- would bring the technical guidelines for the PCA program into line with other programs.

Passing this legislation now is more important than ever due to the pandemic. PCA program participants may need their PCA to drive them for COVID testing or to receive their vaccination. Thank you for your support of HF 1431 and to Rep. Frederick for championing this bill.

Maren Hulden and Melissa Haley
MNCCD Policy Committee Co-Chairs