



May 1, 2023

Rep. Mohamud Noor
379 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Peter Fischer
551 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Dave Baker
259 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. John Hoffman
2111 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Omar Fateh
3219 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Jim Abeler
2207 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chairs Hoffman, Noor, and Members of the Human Services Conference Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Health and Human Services Omnibus Bill.

Founded by parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in 1946, The Arc Minnesota is a statewide nonprofit advocacy organization that promotes and protects the human rights of individuals with IDD, supporting them and their families in a lifetime of full inclusion and participation in their communities. We are a chapter of The Arc of the United States, the largest national community based organization advocating for people with IDD and their families.

The Regional Quality Councils are a program of The Arc Minnesota and The Arc Northland. We work to

- support efforts and initiatives that drive overall systems and social change
- promote the inclusion of people with disabilities
- improve person-centered outcomes in disability services
- identify or enhance quality of life for people with disabilities

The Regional Quality Councils formed a statewide workforce shortage workgroup to identify legislative priorities. The workgroup strongly supports the following items for the final Health and Human Services Omnibus Bill:

1. Disability Waiver Rate System (DWRS) Rate Increase

- Move the next DWRS inflationary adjustment from November 2024 to January 2024, and every two years after that. (SF 2934 2nd Unofficial Engrossment, Article 1, Sec 27 and SF 2934 3rd Engrossment, Article 1, Sec. 25)
- Base DWRS adjustments on two-year-old data from BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics). DWRS currently uses three-year-old data. (SF 2934 2nd Unofficial Engrossment, Article 1, Sec 27, line 41.16).



- We are thankful that these items are in both the House and Senate Omnibus Bill; however, we encourage you to adopt the Senate language to
 - appropriate 111 million in the first biennium and 280 million in the second biennium
 - fully fund the Competitive Workforce Factor (SF 2934 3rd Engrossment, Article 1, Sec. 31).

2. Establish a new Life Sharing Service. This proposal saves the state approximately \$6.5 million in the second biennium. (SF 2934 3rd Engrossment, Article 1, Sec 64)

3. Reform Medical Assistance to Incentivize Employment. This bill is in the Senate Human Services Omnibus Bill, but not the House Human Service Finance Omnibus Bill. We support the Senate recommendation.

4. Expand access to shared services. People with disabilities who need similar services can choose to share services and service providers. This can help address the workforce shortage crisis. (We are hopeful that the language that is included in SF 2934 3rd Engrossment, Article 1, Sec. 62 and 63 can act as placeholder language and the conference committee will work to adopt the language included in SF 654/HF 716.)

5. We support this Senate recommendation to permit people who receive services in their homes to use Individualized Home Supports with Training (IHST) when traveling out of state.

6. Workforce Recruitment and Retention for Providers

- We are thankful that this is included in both the House and the Senate Omnibus Bill. We encourage you to adopt the Senate language which includes
 - 43 Million in funding for grants that is critical in recognizing the important work our current Direct Support Professionals do every day and to recruit new staff to the profession. (SF 2934 3rd Engrossment, Article 1, Sec. 11) and (SF 2934 2nd Unofficial Engrossment, Article 1, Sec. 42)
 - an additional 4 million for a public awareness campaign for the recruitment of DSPs , (SF 2934 3rd Engrossment, Article 1, Sec. 10)

Thank you to both the House and the Senate for including these critical pieces in the Omnibus Bill. We advocate for continued support by our legislators. These items are consistent with our vision of improving the quality of life for people with disabilities. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important bill.

The Regional Quality Council (RQC) Statewide Workforce Shortage Workgroup:

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