

HF1596 (Reyer)/ SF1640 (Morrison)

Dear Representative Reyer, Mr. Chair, and members of the Committee:

My name is Gail Skoglund, and I am the director of adult day services for Cassia, a faith-based non-profit organization serving seniors across Minnesota, and I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to share written testimony on behalf of SF1640.

I have worked in aging services for 39 years, and in adult day services in particular since 1986. I am here to support PACE because of its proven success in surrounding seniors and people with disabilities with relationship-based care.

As you may know, adult day programs were decimated during COVID-19. We were required to shut our doors during the early days of the pandemic and have struggled to recover due to workforce constraints ever since.

This is unfortunate because adult day programs are uniquely able to design programs that affirm the customs and values of a local community. Additionally, *because* they are community-based, they also serve an important role in respite and support for a senior's informal caregiving network. Cassia has 5 adult day centers, 1 urban, 2 suburban, 2 in rural Minnesota. Each center is truly a reflection of the community they are located in. Open Circle of Heritage Park is located in North Minneapolis and serves a very diverse population with 70% of individuals as persons of color. The person-centered programming is designed to meet the needs of those we are serving—honoring their history and heritage, customs, food choices, spiritual component and trust. Therefore, adult day services are a critical part of the senior services continuum. They are also the hub of the PACE model.

I'd like to share an example of how impactful our services can be, and how they'd be used in a PACE-like model. Charlie moved from Illinois to Minneapolis in March of 2022 to live with his daughter after he suffered a major stroke and needed 24 hour support. After stabilizing, his daughter recognized the importance of community for her father with his limitations due to his stroke. She had remembered seeing Open Circle when she had been in the community center for a community event. He joined our program in Sept of 2022. When Charlie enrolled in our program, he rarely spoke and was difficult to understand, only drinking Boost for his nutritional needs as he coughed through most of his meals. Since attending the adult day, we have connected him to the medical clinic for his primary care and he also receives footcare through the clinic. The medical clinic is located within our Community Center. We have also connected him with receiving outpatient care for PT, OT, ST which is located under our same roof.

He is experiencing many positive outcomes as adult day staff have been trained by the therapists on how to encourage exercises to strengthen and improve his physical abilities, implement special dietary modifications to increase his nutritional intake and thus gain weight. His communication abilities have improved—voice projection and participation as he is using those skills daily.

With this PACE like model experience, he is stronger, has gained weight, regained confidence, enjoys friendships with his peers and love going to "school".

The ability to have all providers working for his success, is truly an indicator of the potential of PACE.

HF1596 (Reyer)/ SF1640 (Morrison)

Advancing PACE in Minnesota is one way we could help restore access to adult day services across our state. This would benefit our growing population of seniors and their families in a person-centered and cost-effective manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and thank you for your support of HF1596.