

February 15, 2024

Re: HF 3419



Dear Chair Fischer and Human Services Policy Committee Members,

The Arc Minnesota strongly supports HF 3419, which makes long overdue changes to the Medical Assistance for Employed People with Disabilities (MA-EPD) program. 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.

By ending the termination of benefits due to nonpayment, HF 3419 would make transformational changes that would align our policies with Minnesota's values and directly benefit working Minnesotans with disabilities. For over 20 years now, the MA-EPD program has provided an opportunity for Minnesotans with disabilities to work while accessing critical services and supports through MA. While this program was created to boost employment for people with disabilities, the premiums and administrative burdens are a significant barrier to employment and keep people with disabilities living in poverty. Many accessing the program face financial distress as they are under a constant threat of losing their safety net supports.

Policies that force working people with disabilities to live in poverty in order to access services and supports are dehumanizing. They imply that people with disabilities do not deserve financial stability, let alone prosperity. Administrative processes that monitor this program take away money that could be spent to improve services. They create barriers to economic stability and put an unnecessary burden on people accessing services. When people with disabilities are barely allowed to survive, they are not allowed to thrive and flourish as valued and respected members of society.

The Arc Minnesota encourages the committee to pass HF 3419 to let people with disabilities get beyond just surviving and move on to thriving. We will all benefit from their prosperity.

We are grateful Representative Hicks is introducing this bill and excited to continue dialogue with her and other key decision-makers around additional policy improvements to alleviate the administrative and bureaucratic barriers to this program

Sincerely,

Tina Rucci

*Public Policy Director, The Arc Minnesota*



February 16, 2023

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

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

**Re: HF 3419 – Changes to Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD)**

Dear Chair Fischer, Lead Kiel, and Members of the Committee:

Legal Aid writes to express its support for HF 3419. This bill would allow more Minnesotans with disabilities to work, and continue working, without being forced to make choices between their premiums and other necessities.

For MA-EPD recipients, premiums create an unnecessary barrier and hardship. Minnesotans with disabilities are charged premiums for a crucial program which is needed to receive the home- and community-based services required to get to work and live independently. Even if a disabled person receives health care benefits through their employer, home- and community-based waived services are not covered by the majority of these plans. Last session, there was bipartisan agreement that these premiums should be eliminated. But for a last-minute error, they would have been. This bill would assist Minnesotans struggling to make ends meet to continue to receive vital home- and community-based services even if they are struggling financially.

Thank you for allowing Legal Aid to share its views on this proposal. We urge passage of HF 3419.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Purrington', written in a cursive style.

Jennifer Purrington  
Legal Director/Deputy Director  
Minnesota Disability Law Center

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellen Smart', written in a cursive style.

Ellen Smart  
Staff Attorney  
Legal Services Advocacy Project

This document has been formatted for accessibility. Please call Ellen Smart at 612/746-3761 if you need this document in an alternative format.