

Reinstate Community Access for the PCA Program

Senator Abeler, SF 3456 Rep. Hanson, HF 4085

People who have disabilities accessing Personal Care Assistance (PCA), one of the Home and Community Based Services, should be able to have their PCAs drive them within the guidelines of Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL). IADLs are activities that are not necessary for basic functioning, but that are necessary to live in homes of their own.

Currently, under IADLs, PCAs are allowed to accompany the people they support when they go to medical appointments, work and other activities, but are not allowed to drive them (unless they clock out to do so, which is a violation of the Department of Labor).

Other services that are like the PCA program allow the direct support worker to drive the people they support.

Allowing PCAs to not only accompany, but to transport the people they support:

- is not prohibited by federal policies;
- would help people who have disabilities live, learn, work, participate in their community, and enjoy life in the most integrated setting possible;
- would provide greater access for people who have disabilities, especially in areas where alternative transportation is limited or not available;
- would align with the principles of Minnesota's Olmstead Plan;
- would avoid individuals transferring to more costly waiver services, solely for the purpose of accessing transportation; and
- would bring the technical guidelines for the PCA program into line with other programs.

Considerations for a possible fiscal note:

- This bill passed in 2021 for the CFSS program and was included in the HHS Omnibus budget starting January 1, 2021.
- When determining the amount of PCA time authorized for a client's Service Plan, hours are assessed on the need for Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) only, and do not include IADLs.
- PCA participants do not receive additional authorized time for IADLs, so there will not be an impact to the Service Plan if PCAs are allowed to drive clients under IADLs.
- When a person with a disability is transported to medical appointments by their PCA, there is a cost savings for the State, as the alternative is utilizing more expensive "Medical Transport Services".

Allowing people who have disabilities to be driven by their PCA is key to ensuring that they can participate fully in their communities!

