



May 5, 2021

To: Senate and House Health and Human Services Conference Committee Members

Re: House File 2128-4, Senate File UEH2128-1

Members of the Health and Human Services Conference Committee:

On behalf of The Arc Minnesota, we thank you for your work and commitment to issues that directly impact the lives of Minnesotans who have disabilities, their family members, and support professionals. Below are provisions of greatest importance to our stakeholders, as well as some areas of concern, in the Senate and House Health and Human Services omnibus bills.

Provisions of support in both House and Senate:

- **Inclusive child care** (HF 2128-4, 641.28; UEH2128-1, 803.1) creating a pilot project with grant funds to help connect children who have disabilities with inclusive child care in their communities
- **Investments in rate increases for Minnesota's Personal Care Assistance (PCA) program** (HF 2128-4, 566.26; UEH2128-1, 518.18) We appreciate creative strategies for investing in the PCA program and support the PCA rate framework included in HF 2128-4. We ask that the committee adopt the structure of this framework, to help ensure long-term sustainability in Minnesota's PCA program.
- **Paid parents and spouses as PCAs** (HF 2128-4, 583.20; UEH2128-1, 512.24) extending the timeframe for parents and spouses of people who have disabilities to be reimbursed as PCAs
- **Revitalization of Regional Quality Councils** (HF 2128-4, 532.5; UEH2128-1, 456.8) supporting efforts and initiatives that drive overall systems and social change to promote inclusion of people who have disabilities in Minnesota

Provisions of support in the House omnibus:

- **Vaccine equity** (HF 2128-4, 180.7) overcoming disparities in COVID-19 vaccination rates based on ethnicity, income, primary language, immigration status, or disability
- **Prohibition on premium collection** (HF 2128-4, 84.4) waiving premium payment for individuals accessing MinnesotaCare during the peacetime emergency

Provisions of support in the Senate omnibus:

- **Systems Transformation** (UEH2128-1, 463.1) promoting and strengthening our commitment to informed decision-making, inclusive housing, competitive employment, self-direction, and assistive technology
- **Minnesota Inclusion Initiative** (UEH2128-1, 439.29) establishing microgrants for self-advocate leaders statewide to support systems and social change, and inclusion initiatives
- **PCA enhanced rate** (UEH2128-1, 442.29) providing a rate increase for PCA/CFSS services accessed by individuals who get 10 or more hours of support per day
- **Direct support during short-term acute hospital visits** (UEH2128-1, 511.18) developing a new covered service to ensure people who have disabilities can access individualized support from DSPs/PCAs while admitted to an acute care hospital

- **Community access for individuals supported by PCA services** (UEH2128-1, 511.28) directing the Department of Human Services to prepare a proposal that will allow PCAs to provide transportation for the individuals they support
- **Investments in home health agency services and home care nursing rates** (UEH2128-1, 519.1) helping create more stability in critical services accessed by people who have disabilities and medical complexities in their homes
- **Parental fee elimination** (UEH2128-1, 258.23) removing financial barriers to families accessing Medical Assistance for their children who have disabilities

Provisions of interest:

- **Non-discrimination in organ transplants** (UEH2128-1, 739.9) ending discriminatory policies regarding organ transplants that impact people who have Down Syndrome. We are grateful that this provision is included in the Senate Human Services omnibus, as well as the House Judiciary omnibus and hope it will be included in global, final negotiations.
- **Waiver Reimagine** (HF 2128-4, 585.3) The Arc Minnesota has been engaged in Waiver Reimagine since its inception, and have been grateful for the opportunity to represent our stakeholders statewide in this process. We remain committed to working alongside DHS to inform and advance the project – especially as they work to implement an individual budget methodology, which we greatly support. We have expressed a concern around previous budget ranges that seemed to create disincentives for individuals to live in their own homes or a family home. It is our understanding that the Department is working to correct this. We have also made specific requests that DHS increase clarity in the overall process of project implementation, enhance strategies for equitable and accessible information sharing about changes resulting from the project, and suggested opportunities for more meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Provisions of concern:

- **Non-Emergency Medical Transportation** (HF 2128-4, starting 36.9) We are concerned that these changes, including the projected savings, could result in limited access to needed transportation services for people who have disabilities across the state.
- **Lead agency waiver allocation changes** (UEH2128-1, 454.10) We are committed to policies that promote access to timely, equitable supports, but are concerned that this provision as currently structured will negatively impact access to supports and perpetuate inequities in service access across counties.

The Arc Minnesota is grateful for the many provisions of importance to our stakeholders and appreciate the opportunity to provide input. We will continue to work in collaboration with legislative leaders and champions such as yourselves to ensure all Minnesotans who have disabilities have the opportunity to build belonging in their communities and access inclusive, individualized supports.

Thank you again for your leadership on behalf of Minnesotans who have disabilities statewide.

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