

May 2, 2023

Chair Noor and Members of the Conference Committee - Human Services Omnibus

Re: SF2934/HF 2934 - Support for Elimination of MN TEFRA and Increased Home Care Nursing Reimbursement Rates

My name is Robyn Churchill. I live in House District 50A and Senate District 50 with my husband and three children. My youngest son has complex medical needs and a developmental disability. I am asking for your continued support of individuals with disabilities and complex medical needs as you work through House and Senate Omnibus bill differences.

In particular, my family is very concerned about two items in the Omnibus bill and I ask for full inclusion of both of these in the final bill:

1. Elimination of TEFRA Fees: I am asking for the House and Senate bills to be reconciled to both include the elimination of the parental pay for MN TEFRA. Minnesota is one of only 5 states that continue to tax families with a child with a disability. Given our high fee, as a family, we are not accessing many of the supports available to our son through MA and Home and Community Based Services. I attended the House Human Services Policy hearing on 3/1 and submitted written testimony. During this hearing, I heard several members of the Human Services Committee refer to this policy and practice as outrageous, embarrassing, shocking, dumbfounded. The time is now to make this critical elimination to support families with disabilities.
2. Increase of reimbursement for home care nursing: I appreciated seeing increases for home care nursing included in the House and Senate Omnibus bills as this funding is critical to bring stability to our home care nursing staff. I ask that this reimbursement be reconciled for an increase of reimbursement rates by 55%. Chronically low reimbursement rates make it impossible for nursing agencies to provide the competitive wages and benefits that are required to hire and retain nurses. Our nurses should be paid for the type of care they provide (ICU level) and not paid by where they work (in the home). In April, my son's primary nurse was out sick for several days. There is no back up in the system to pick up those nursing shifts. Fortunately for our son, I had left my full-time employment just days prior for the primary reason that we needed stability at home to ensure the needs of our medically complex son are met at home and not at a hospital.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration of these important matters as you meet in Conference Committee.

Kind regards,  
Robyn Churchill