| Haven Country Care Home | File:<strong>German</strong> <strong>Shepherd</strong> (PSF).png - The Work of God's Children  2153 45th Street SE  St. Cloud, MN 56301  320-420-8333  Troyostrowski64@gmail.com |
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May 1, 2023

RE: HF 2847 & SF 2934 – moving to a Flat tier system

HF999 & SF1015 – Increase DWRS framework rates to be competitive

To: Chairs Hoffman, Noor and members of the Human Services Conference Committee

I am sending this letter to you today regarding HF2847 & SF2934, the Governor’s proposal to move FRS homes from current framework to a flat tiered system, effective 2026. The rates proposed in the flat tiered system is not sustainable enough to provide care in our homes and in the long run we will need to close. Not only will it affect the provider to make a hard choice, but also the individuals that live in our home. Many individuals have lived in their current home for many years. Have a loving family lifestyle & structure. How is this change fair to them? What a time to make the change, when the economy is not strong and the increasing cost for EVERYTHING.

Also, I support the HF999 & SF 1015 for the Best Life Alliance ad DWRS frameworks rate increase. We need to be able to pay our staff a fair wage like all others, to give us time off to do personal needs of own. Also, there is a huge shortage of workers in today’s world. It is hard enough to find staffing when they make barely over the minimum wage.

During my 20 plus years being an FRS or Family Residential Provider, provider it has been rewarding to know and see how living in a family setting and providing one on one attention does to help these individuals have a good quality life style. Having the atmosphere of a family setting, with structure, routine and minimal staff changes makes a significate difference for disabled individuals. Keep in mind we do need staffing to accommodate the needs for the people. It takes time to give them the quality of life they need and want. Some need many prompts throughout the day to accomplish small tasks, some need to be shown multiple times the steps needed to finish a task before they understand and can do it on their own, some have behaviors and we work with them on calming skills when they are in the moment. These are a few examples of areas we work on with our people. Even though we live in our home, the needs for everyone are different, and to meet those needs and provide a quality lifestyle, comes the requirement of staffing outside those who live in the home.

There has been assumption that FRS homes only take the people that need very little care or just need a safe environment to live. This assumption is not true! Has anyone ever taken the time to talk to a few FRS providers to get facts on what transpires in their homes?

Please explain how it is even logical to decrease rates when FRS homes have the same amount of paperwork, EXPENSES, and other requirements as does CRS home. How are FRS providers any different? Please remember that we have given up our personal life, home, and family-time to help individuals with disabilities have a good, healthy, structured lifestyle. How would you feel if your pay was reduced close to half with no explanation or opportunity to correct the issues/concerns? The person who is hurt in the end is the individual with the disability especially now with staffing shortages.

In the long run, many FRS providers will not be able to provide services that are needed in a structured environment and the people they service will need to move to a corporate setting. It would be safe to say that many FRS homes are not aware of this change to express their concerns.

I will end asking that to not let the flat rate change happen to FRS homes. Our services are just as important as CRS homes.

Please support the DWRS framework rate increase. It will be greatly reward to keep good staff with a pay increase especially with the current economy.

Thank you for taking time to read my concerns.

Sincerely,

Troy Ostrowski

Haven Country Care Home