

April 8, 2024

Dear Chair Fischer and Members of the Human Services Policy Committee:

On behalf of ARRM's more than 180 residential service providers, supporting both adults and children in 245D licensed settings, we would like to thank the Chair for the attention given to services that support children and specifically the hearing on the out-of-state placement of children in residential services.

ARRM members provide services to meet the needs of children and their families and do so in a variety of settings, including group homes, services provided in a child's home, different in-home and out-of-home respite options, and more. Regardless of the setting, workforce shortages continue to be a leading challenge in consistently providing services and support.

With high turnover and vacancy rates for Direct Support Professionals and supervisors, it is challenging to maintain current services, let alone expand the services that providers are offering. Stabilizing the disability services workforce continues to be the top priority for ARRM and as we think about how to better support children across the state, it needs to be a priority for the legislature. We are grateful for the attention this committee has given to the problem thus far and the commitment to continue working on solutions.

As this committee continues to contemplate how to best support children with disabilities here in Minnesota, ARRM members have identified additional barriers and challenges that exist in supporting children in 245D licensed settings, these include:

- Property destruction is a common outcome when supporting children with complex needs, there is a lack of funding to address these costs creating another barrier for providers to support children with a history of destruction.
- Coordinating services with schools can be very challenging. Schools operate under different rules and providers have reported difficulty in support and consistency.
- The approach to maltreatment and child protection investigations can differ by county. Additionally, counties have a different understanding when utilizing the culture of safety approach to investigations vs. placing and finding blame. This discrepancy and varying approach in investigations result in providers being reluctant to support children with complex needs.
- Families are not getting the proper support and intervention they need.



Finally, 245D providers face immense challenges in supporting children under a system of rules and regulations that were written through the lens of supporting adults. What may seem like common sense boundaries and rules for children is a rights restriction in a 245D licensed home. Allowing providers to put in place basic rules will not only protect the well-being of the child, but it will also support the provider in creating a safe living environment.

ARRM is committed to working with the legislature and stakeholders in identifying provisions within 245D that create barriers for providers in providing services to children and determining common sense changes that consider the health and safety of the child and the unique circumstances that come with supporting children.

We again thank the Chair and committee members for the discussion today. We look forward to future discussions and the development of services that better meet the needs of children and families across the state and strive to be a partner with the legislature and community members on this critical work.

Sincerely,

Sara Grafstrom  
Senior Director of State and Federal Policy  
ARRM