



AbleLight



Bethesda

Bethesda is now AbleLight

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Victoria, MN 55386
AbleLight.org

2/16/2022

To: Members of the Senate Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee
RE: Increasing Access to Life Sharing

Dear Chair Abeler and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support of a bill that will increase access to the Life Sharing service model. Life Sharing is a person centered, community based, and culturally responsive support for Minnesotans with disabilities.

AbleLight (formerly Bethesda Lutheran Communities) is a national provider of services for people with disabilities. AbleLight believes that the world shines brighter when people with developmental disabilities achieve their full potential. Here in Minnesota AbleLight provides residential service options including Life Sharing, housing options, employment supports and in-home supports to people with developmental disabilities.

As a Life Sharing provider in Minnesota, we have seen how successful Life Sharing can be for people. We have also frequently experienced the barriers that currently exist preventing individuals from taking advantage of Life Sharing as an option. As a national provider we directly experience how successful Life Sharing has been for people in other states.

This legislation is important for many reasons including the importance of collaborating with other stakeholders to develop Life Sharing as a new waived service. Specifically, the proposal will increase access and remove barriers through research of successful service models used in other states, identify ways to expand awareness, and discuss how it could be expanded to additional populations.

Perhaps most importantly this legislation will help shine a light on barriers that currently exist and identify solutions for making Life Sharing more accessible to people with disabilities.

We are grateful to partner with other providers in this important work.

If we can be of any help in supporting this issue, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at monica.schmidt@ablelight.org or 763-370-4817. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation.

Monica Schmidt

Monica Schmidt
Senior Director of Operations
AbleLight