



February 8, 2023

Chair Hoffman and Committee Members,

Thank you, Senator Hoffman and Human Service Committee Members, for holding this hearing on the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Program.

The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD) is a broad coalition of over 30 advocacy and provider organizations along with individual members, working to change public policy to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

PCA is a critical service that helps individuals with disabilities and older adults remain in their home and out of more costly congregate care settings. We know that the PCA service likely saves the state millions of dollars. We also know that most people prefer to live in their home and their community where they live happier and healthier lives and the PCA program supports them to do this.

We fully support the provisions of the tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) reached last month, as it provides increased wages and improved benefits for the hard working, dedicated PCAs. We also know that the funding to the providers must support the provisions of the CBA. Without fully funding the provisions we will lose providers and especially the small culturally specific providers. The PCA program is the most culturally diverse of all Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), with 63% of those accessing services being BIPOC. It is critical that these individuals can choose an agency that understands their culture and speaks their language.

We support SF 695, which continues the work of the PCA Framework passed into law two years ago by updating the cost components and adding inflationary adjustments. We also ask that you fully fund the framework.

Finally, we would also like to draw your attention to the cover article in the Sunday, February 5 Star Tribune by Chris Serres titled "Inside a Minnesota woman's fight to overturn guardianship." No one should have their rights taken away or need to spend months in the hospital because they cannot find staff to help them in their home. Investment in programs like PCA will start to address the critical direct care shortage and hopefully help prevent tragic stories like this from reoccurring.

Thank you,

Julia Page, MNCCD Policy Co-Chair

Trevor Turner, MNCCD Policy Co-Chair