

Re: S.F. 925

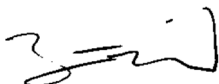
Dear Members of the Human Services Committee:

The Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (OMHDD) writes to express our agency's support of S.F. 925, which proposes to increase the number of hours that a parent of a minor or a spouse may be paid to provide disability-related care under the Consumer-Directed Community Supports (CDCS) option within Minnesota's Disability Waivers and similar programs and the Community First Services and Supports (CFSS) program. We agree with the sentiments expressed in the letters submitted by The Arc Minnesota and by the Minnesota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, that these changes are necessary and represent sound policy.

Lifting the current 40-hour limitation on paying parents of minors or spouses to provide critical, disability-related care supports the foundational principles of ensuring informed choice and person-centered services. The existing limitation has made it difficult for many individuals to develop and implement truly individualized and appropriate service plans designed to help them live in their preferred, "most integrated setting" consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and our state's *Olmstead* Plan. In many instances, as the Arc and MN-CCD point out, capping what parents and spouses can be paid at 40 total hours per week does not mean that someone else provides the care; it merely means that family members are forced to provide unpaid care. When we consider that non-family, congregate care settings are reimbursed for every hour that care staff works, ensuring that parents and spouses can also be paid for providing the same kind of care at home is both fair and equitable.

We recognize that this bill is just one important but positive policy step that your committee is considering as you address the myriad problems presented by our direct care workforce crisis. We appreciate the depth and breadth of your commitment to improving the services and supports that people who have disabilities rely on to live and prosper in the homes and communities of their choice. Please feel free to reach out to us if we can provide any additional information or assistance. Thank you for your consideration and ongoing efforts.

Sincerely,



Barnett (Bud) Rosenfield
Ombudsman

Minnesota Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

O: 651-757-1806

C: 651-529-0014