

Senator John Hoffman, Chair
2111 Minnesota State Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Senator Jim Abeler, Minority Leader
2207 Minnesota State Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Hoffman, Lead Abeler, and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

I'm Lance Hegland, a person with disabilities who has relied on long-term care through various Minnesota disability programs for over 30 years. I'm currently living in a community residential setting in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota District 38A. For over 15 years, I lived in an apartment in Minneapolis District 60B using personal care services. During November 2021, I needed to seek refuge in a group home after the in-home support workforce and industry collapsed.

It was difficult to find residential placement because of staffing shortages, inaccessible homes, and management with little industry understanding. Since 2021, my residential program per diem rate has decreased 33%. My health hasn't improved. My needs haven't decreased. My assessment didn't change. So, why did I lose these vital resources? It seems we're rationing limited funding among more people who are living longer with more frequent and complex support needs. It seems like we're ignoring reasonable costs to deliver support.

The proposed Waiver Reimage seems to incentivize residential and institutional placement. We seem to be systematically encouraging Minnesotans to place their trust for their health, safety, dignity, and inclusion in a relatively inexperienced, floundering industry. Several mature providers and non-profits have needed to reduce support due to inadequate reimbursements, inability to offer competitive and liveable compensation, plus resulting shortage of qualified and reliable workers.

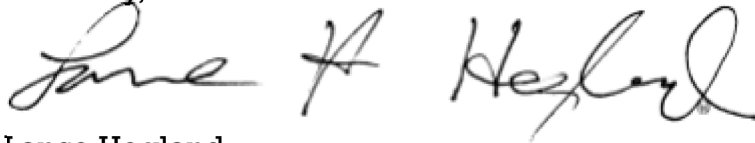
These changes don't seem aligned with the Supreme Court's Olmstead Decision, Minnesota's Jensen Settlement, or disability and aging program materials distributed by state and county agencies.

Can we – Minnesotans with disabilities, those with chronic illness, and older adults – trust our state, counties, and contracted providers to consistently support and protect our health, safety, dignity, and inclusion? We need accurate information so we can make informed decisions about our lives. We can't risk more false hope, illusions, or distractions.

If support and protection currently are not reliable, and likely will not be in the near future, state leaders should be open and honest about that. To deny accurate information, informed decision-making, and options to avoid suffering under those conditions seems inhumane. If reliable support isn't available, leaders should practice mercy by ensuring Minnesotans have options, including a compassionate and dignified end of life, such as HF1930 and SF1813.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lance A. Hegland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lance" being the most prominent.

Lance Hegland
Brooklyn Park, Minnesota District 38A