



February 14, 2025

The Honorable John A. Hoffman
Chair, Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate
2111 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Jordan Rasmusson
Ranking Minority Member, Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate
2409 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Governor's Human Services Budget

Dear Chair Hoffman, Ranking Minority Member Rasmusson, and Members of the Committee:

Legal Aid and the Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the Governor's budget. We understand the need to balance the budget and appreciate the herculean task you are presented with. However, this should not be done by compromising the lives and wellbeing of Minnesota's most vulnerable citizens. Although we are opposed to the majority of these cuts, we will limit this letter to our four biggest concerns

The worst is the cap on inflation. In a presentation to your committee last month, Direct Care and Treatment staff stated that Minnesota was short 58,000 healthcare worker positions. The largest part of healthcare budgets are salaries. Most people can earn more at entry-level jobs at Target now than they can at a more stressful job as a PCA or home health care worker. Capping inflation will exacerbate the staffing crisis. Some facilities are already paying their workers more than they are being reimbursed in order to keep their facilities open. In the financial impact statement of who will be affected, the Governor noted that "[d]irect care workers in this field are disproportionately women and people of color." Capping inflation will create unsafe situations at home and force people who can no longer find homecare workers to move to group homes and institutional settings. It will create unsafe situations in institutional settings. It will force facilities to close.

The “next worst” cut is the 351-day cap on residential services. We believe that the resulting budget fallout will also have a dire effect on staffing. Facilities will close, services will decline, and people who need residential placement will stay in hospitals until beds are available.

Likewise, we believe the changes to the absence and utilization factor in day services will also have a tremendous negative impact on staffing and force facilities to close.

The daily time limitation of eight hours on Individualized Home Supports (IHS) with training services will have a profound effect on the ability of Minnesotans with disabilities to either move to their own homes or remain in their own homes, especially for Minnesotans in rural areas. Creating an arbitrary limit of 8 hours of IHS with training per day will likely create a staffing nightmare for many individuals who wish to receive services in their own homes. IHS and PCA are not handled by the same organizations, so service recipients will be forced to find two agencies to get their staffing needs met. If someone qualifies for 8 hours of IHS services and just a few hours of PCA staffing, it will be next-to-impossible to get the PCA staffing needs met, especially if that person is in greater Minnesota where staffing needs are highest.

If the Governor’s cuts take place, they will harm Minnesotans with disabilities by taking away needed services. The cuts limit payment for waiver services, which will likely force people with disabilities to go without services. These budget cuts threaten to further exacerbate the staffing shortages that already exist. Cutting these vital services will negatively impact other parts of our healthcare system, including placing additional strain on our already overtaxed hospitals and emergency rooms.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the Governor’s budget. We urge this committee to reject these cuts and ensure that Minnesotans with disabilities do not see a rollback of services and living conditions.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Purrington
Legal Director/Deputy Director
Minnesota Disability Law Center



Ellen Smart
Staff Attorney
Legal Services Advocacy Project

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