

March 20, 2025

Re: Support for SF 2796 – Waiver Case Management Rate Increase

Chair Hoffman and Members of the Human Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for SF 2796, which addresses Minnesota's human services workforce crisis by increasing reimbursement rates for waiver case management and establishing a sustainable framework for fair compensation and workforce stability.

At Accord, we empower individuals living with disabilities or mental health conditions to achieve their personal and professional goals and live life to the fullest. Through evidence-based approaches, we deliver transformative programs and services across the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota—including essential case management.

Every day, our team of more than 80 case managers, case aides, and support staff work to connect individuals with disabilities to vital services, coordinate care, and advocate for their needs. This support enables people to live independently and thrive in their communities.

However, despite the critical nature of this work, reimbursement rates have remained unchanged since 2015. As a result, organizations like ours face significant challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified professionals.

The workforce shortage has reached a crisis point. In 2024, the average tenure of a new case manager was just four months—a troubling statistic that underscores the instability individuals face when trying to build trusted, long-term relationships with their case managers. Without action, these challenges will deepen, threatening the continuity and quality of care for those who depend on it most.

SF 2796 offers key solutions by:

- Increasing reimbursement rates to help agencies provide competitive wages and retain experienced staff;
- Requiring annual labor market analyses to ensure rates remain responsive to workforce conditions;
- Establishing a structured rate review process to prevent future stagnation.

These reforms will help strengthen the case management workforce, minimize service disruptions, and ensure people with disabilities receive the high-quality support they deserve.

Case managers play a vital role in ensuring that state disability funds are used effectively—an investment in this workforce is an investment in both care and cost efficiency.

Failure to act will lead to more vacancies, greater strain on families, and fewer Minnesotans with disabilities receiving the services they need. By passing SF 2796, Minnesota can take a crucial step toward long-term workforce stability and stronger support for our most vulnerable residents.

We respectfully urge your support for this important legislation. Thank you for your leadership and ongoing commitment to strengthening Minnesota's human services system.

Sincerely,

Rita Wiersma
Chief Executive Officer
Accord