

3/23/2025

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 seeks to address the human services workforce crisis by increasing reimbursement rates for waiver case management and establishing a long-term framework for fair compensation and workforce stability.

My name is Jordan Duncan, and I'm a waiver case manager supervisor at Fraser. I'm submitting comments on my own behalf and not that of my company.

In my role, I provide waiver case management services to individuals with disabilities in Dakota County. Every day, my team helps individuals with disabilities access critical services, coordinate care, and advocate for their needs, allowing them to live independently. We help with a wide array of issues, including housing, employment, mental and physical health, behavioral issues, addiction and more. However, despite the essential nature of this work, reimbursement rates have not increased since 2015, and agencies like ours are struggling to recruit and retain qualified case managers.

The workforce shortage has reached a crisis point. I've seen many strong and competent case managers leave our organization for more highly paid positions elsewhere, and the turnout my team has experienced in the past few years is becoming untenable. Because our work is so complicated, our typical onboarding process takes roughly one year to fully train a new case manager. Without increases to waiver funding rate, our ability to hire qualified, passionate and capable individuals will be significantly reduced and the quality of services we can provide will be impacted. Without immediate action on waiver case management rates, we will likely have additional problems like increased case sizes and processing delays.

Without action, the situation will continue to worsen, leaving people with disabilities without the consistent, high-quality case management support they need.

SF 2796 takes essential steps to stabilize the waiver case management workforce by:

- Increasing reimbursement rates to help agencies offer competitive wages and retain skilled professionals.
- Requiring an annual labor market analysis to ensure rates reflect real workforce conditions.
- Establishing a structured review process to prevent future stagnation in funding.

These changes will help address workforce shortages, reduce service disruptions, and ensure that people with disabilities receive the high-quality case management they deserve. Case managers ensure state disability funds are used effectively, and investing in this workforce now will prevent higher costs down the road.

Failing to act means more case managers leaving the field, more families struggling to navigate complex systems alone, and more Minnesotans with disabilities losing access to vital supports. By passing SF 2796, Minnesota can make a much-needed investment in the stability and well-being of both case managers and the people they serve.

We urge you to support this critical legislation. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to strengthening Minnesota's human services workforce. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions at **952-737-6267**.

Sincerely,

Jordan Duncan
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