



ACTION ALERT

Background for Individuals and Families:

As we head deeper into 2023, disability services advocates are working hard at the State Capitol to advance legislation that impacts the people we serve at PAI. This legislative session, two bills are moving forward that directly impact our services:

- **MOHR Extended Employment Bill HF 1501/SF 1271**, aimed to further integrate and create job opportunities for people with disabilities;
- **Disability Waiver Rate System Bill HF 999/SF 1015**, aimed to update service reimbursement rates so disability providers can pay their staff a competitive wage.

You can support this legislation and PAI by sending your MN state legislator an email about the impact these topics have on you and/or your family. You can look up who your MN state legislators are, as well as their email addresses [here](#). Please note that messages should be sent to *your* **MN State Representative** and **MN State Senator**.

The Main Point – Writing a Great Opener:

Open the email by noting that you are reaching out as a constituent. Acknowledge that you understand legislators are being asked to address several important needs this session given how destabilizing the worker shortage and COVID have been for a wide variety of human services in our state.

Why the Situation is Serious:

Provide your legislator with brief information about how severe the situation is:

- Individuals with disabilities comprise the largest minority group in the county. These people deserve to find meaningful work and explore opportunities that match their personal interests and goals;
- Due to severe staffing shortages, more than 3,500 Minnesotans are currently on waiting lists for Employment or Day Support Services. Some have been waiting lists for more than three years; and
- Employment and Day Support Service programs are funded by the reimbursement rate set in statute. This means that staff pay rates are largely controlled by legislative action. The current state reimbursement rates are out of date and are underfunded, making wages uncompetitive.

How this impacts You and/or Your Family:

Share with your legislator how the lack of DSP staff has impacted you and/or your family member's ability to access the disability services they desire. Try to be brief but specific: how the lack of staff has limited the services you can access and how those service access barriers have impacted your daily life.

What Needs to be Done:

Prompt your legislator to consider that if we as a state value Minnesotans with disabilities living a full and meaningful life, we must move to a society that employs individuals with disabilities and increase the state set reimbursement rates. By increasing the reimbursement rate, we will allow staff wages and benefits to be above those of local fast food and other entry-level retail work opportunities.

Your Specific Ask of You MN Representative and MN State Senator – Writing a Great Closing:

Ask your legislator to consider adding their name as a co-author on the **MOHR Extended Employment Bill HF 1501/SF 1271**, and the **Disability Waiver Rate System Bill HF 999/SF 1015**. Close your email by offering for your legislator to reach out with any questions, thanking them for their service, and including your name/city.