

2023 MN LEGISLATIVE BILLS WE'RE WATCHING

EMPLOYMENT-FOCUSED BILLS

Issue #1: STRENGTHEN THE DISABILITY WAIVER RATE SYSTEM (DWRS)

About: Employment and Day services programs are funded by the state's Medicaid DWRS reimbursement, meaning staff pay rates are largely controlled by legislative action. The current DWRS uses wage data that is out of date, making it extremely challenging to hire and retain workers because wages are not competitive. This results in individuals with disabilities being left out of the workforce and unable to access day supports because providers cannot hire enough staff to support them. The Best Life Alliance legislation proposes adjustments to the DWRS focused on using more current economic data for updates to reimbursement rates. This will allow providers to offer more competitive wages and benefits, in turn helping more Minnesotans to access services.

Numbers to watch: House File 999 | Senate File 1015

Issue #2: STRENGTHEN THE EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

About: The MN Department of Employment and Economic Development oversees a critical disability employment support service called Extended Employment. This disability employment support program helps Minnesotans to reach their competitive employment goals. The proposed MOHR Extended Employment legislation would increase the sustainability of the Extended Employment program by adjusting the reimbursement rate to be more responsive to current market trends and therefore increasing access to this important service.

Numbers to watch: House File 1501 | Senate File 1271

MENTAL HEALTH-FOCUSED BILLS

Issue #3: INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORTS (IPS) FUNDING

About: The previous budget provided one-time funding. If those funds expire, current IPS grants will be cut by 27%--almost \$1 million per year. That means 350 people will lose IPS services. A proposed budget increase to \$9 million would preserve services for the 350 Minnesotans in danger of losing them and allow an additional 325 Minnesotans IPS access, providing more employment supports to Minnesotans with serious mental illness.

Numbers to watch: House File 1697 | Senate File 1779

Issue #4: ARMHS FUNDING SUPPORT

About: Because rates for mental health services are low, mental health providers are significantly underpaid compared to other providers with the same level of education, preparation, expertise, and training requirements. A rate increase is especially important during this time of high mental health needs. Rise provides adult rehabilitative mental health services (ARMHS), housing, and employment supports to some of our most vulnerable citizens. Our ARMHS program provides services in nine counties across Central Minnesota and in Anoka County. There are so few ARMHS providers in these areas that our waitlists are long. More funding would allow us to hire staff and grow our own program, AND encourage other people to enter the profession, reducing waitlists for this critical service.

Numbers to watch: House File 1683 | Senate File 1615

Issue #5: BRIDGES RENTAL ASSISTANCE SUPPORT

About: The Bridges Rental Assistance program is a vital component of the spectrum of housing resources for people with mental illness. Many people with mental illness in our communities are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless upon discharge from an institution. Those who are homeless often experience worsening mental health symptoms creating a cycle of mental health crisis, institutionalization and then homelessness again. Bridges funding helps to stop this cycle and allows people to move toward health and self-sufficiency.

Numbers to watch: House File 1696 | Senate File 1603

Issue #6:

988 SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE FUNDING SUPPORT

About:

The people we serve regularly use the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Without this critical service, many more people will suffer and potentially die by suicide. The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline also preserves emergency resources for those in the greatest danger by de-escalating over 95% of situations on the phone or via text.

Building capacity for the 988 Lifeline centers by initiating a telecom fee is a critical step toward addressing mental health and crisis response needs in Minnesota and reducing the engagement of 911 response and law enforcement in mental health crisis.

Numbers to watch: House File 1566 | Senate File 2588