

Honorable Chair Hoffman, and Human Services Committee:

My name is Becky Bosl, Cedar Hills Foster Care. I am a Family Residential Services provider. I have been 245D & 245A licensed since 2016. I have one person in my home who has been with us for 7 years now.

I am in STRONG OPPOSITION to a few key factors in the Governor's Budget Proposal as they relate to Family Residential Services and other waived services.

Family Residential Services provide 24/7 care for the individuals we support. This means, a person **lives** in our home. Yes, occasionally they go home to visit family or friends. Let me be clear: We do NOT bill for the days our residents are away from our programs. For perspective, my client was away from my program 11 days last year that I did NOT bill (or get paid) for.

We provide all the same 245D required (and above) standards of care, licensing expectations, extensive training, and medical documentation, programming, transportation, and administrative tasks that any other 245D licensed service would offer. Just because we live in our homes, many believe that our personal lives are embedded into our "paid time". The reality of this is that ALL of our personal life is embedded with providing the cares and services needed as they arise. Every meal, every family gathering, every outing with friends, every vacation, every moment of everyday is embedded with providing the services needed. The person we serve requires constant supervision like most others.

As you know, Family Residential Services has already seen DRASTIC rate cuts with the tiered rate structure. Unlike Director Bailey mentioned (at the Senate Hearing for SF 4310 to Restore Framework rates) we **do** know what Tiered Rate our clients will be on. This is in the MN-Choice Assessment. I was given this document with the case mix identifier from the Case Manager who performed the assessment at our last Annual Team Meeting. There is no uncertainty about what our tiered rates will be for our clients. *This was misinformation.*

Governor's Budget Concerns

Proposal to Reduce the tiered rates by another 25%.

Currently, our resident will see a decrease in funding of 41.5% due to the implemented tiered rate structure. This is already unsustainable for our home. Reducing funding by another 25% will only force the remaining family residential service homes out of business. My resident will then be forced by policy & budgetary decisions into a higher cost and more restrictive setting against her will. If she were to be placed into a Corporate Residential Home, the rates would increase by 58.1% from the current tiered rate to the CRS rate. This is before another 25% cut. **This is a cost shift to a much higher cost and more restrictive setting.** Homes have already begun to close with many more closing as they move to tiered rates. So far, 55 closures and 141 beds have already closed since implementation. Where are these vulnerable adults going to go? The state does not have the capacity to cover the closures that are coming. This is a cost shift with human lives involved that will only hurt our vulnerable and disabled and cost more money.

Reduction to 351 Billing days.

This is WAGE THEFT. In what other circumstance is it legal and acceptable to demand someone provide services for 14 days for free? Some of our residents do not have families to go home to, friends to visit, or other factors that keep them in their residential service homes 365 days a year. AND residential services DO NOT bill for the days their residents are away from the program. This cannot be legal to expect someone to do the services at the same professional level while not getting paid at all. This is unimaginable and I cannot comprehend how anyone can justify this. This punishes the providers and the residents who already have unfortunate circumstances. Nothing is quite like kicking someone while they are down. Would you be okay with two weeks of unpaid mandatory work? How is this legal or just?

Inflationary Adjustments

Inflationary adjustments should also be based on the ever-changing costs of living. Capping the inflationary increases at 2% will have lasting impacts. The cost-of-living changes within our programs too. We provide food, housing, supplies, transportation, utilities, etc. These expenses fluctuate for residential services just the same as they do everywhere else.

Expanding EVV into residential services

While this sounds reasonable on paper, expanding EVV services take the presence of staff away from hands-on care and replaces that presence with paperwork. This leads to many risks of stability, safety, and housing. It also forces the staff to be more concerned with the time clock than focusing on the person who needs services. It does not allow for staff to adapt to the needs of the person as needs change, unexpected equipment malfunctions, behaviors arise, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Please consider that these budget changes will impact thousands of lives. This is going to lead to a **COST SHIFT** of services being provided in higher cost settings and more restrictive settings. This is policy and budget forcing displacement of individuals with special needs. This is not person-centered, not in keeping with the Olmstead Agreement, not in congruence with individual support plans or individual abuse prevention plans, and it risks so much more than the \$\$ documented in this budget. This is about human lives and continuity of care in the least restrictive preferred setting.

Please do what is right and support the lives of those who cannot advocate for themselves. Like Josh Berg said in his testimony at the House hearing, “When community-based services destabilize people do not need less support, they lose their homes”. This couldn’t be more true.

Thank you for your consideration and for reading my letter.

Becky Bosl

Cedar Hills Foster Care

Family Residential Services.