



Media Release

Contact:

Drew Henry

dhenry@arrm.org

651-291-1086 ext. 4

651-210-0788

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Disability Care Staff Shortage Draws Hundreds To the Capitol

More than 1,000 people rallied in support of better wages for staff that care for people with disabilities to address shortages around the state

SAINT PAUL, MINN. – Today, ARRM, an association representing over 200 direct care providers and supporting service providers for people with disabilities in Minnesota, joined with more than 1,000 direct care workers, disability advocates and the people who rely on support staff to rally for higher wages and other policies to address the shortages of staff for critical services across the state.

Many people with disabilities rely on staff assistance for a wide range of support services, from performing daily tasks that help support their independent living and employment, to managing significant behavioral and physical health challenges. Due to a combination of demographic trends leading to a shrinking pool of workers and uncompetitive wages, companies that provide services and people who hire their own staff are increasingly unable to recruit or retain the talent they need.

“The staffing situation is impacting the quality of life for more than 60,000 people with disabilities in Minnesota, and threatening the viability of organizations that provide essential services,” said Cheryl Pray, ARRM CEO, who addressed the rally on Tuesday. “The amazing collection, energy and unity of the people here today demonstrates the urgency behind the need for action.”

Nearly all the funding for these services, more than 95 percent, comes from Medicaid, with service reimbursement rates set by the state, limiting the ability of employers to generate significant across the board wage increases themselves. Several of the rally speakers were direct care workers who shared stories of working large amounts of overtime to cover empty shifts, or needing to work second and third jobs just to make ends meet. Nearly a dozen state legislators also addressed the crowd.

In addition to the rally, advocates held more than 160 meetings with legislators and packed a hearing room where the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee heard the bill to raise direct care staff wages (HF 873). Supporters also filled an overflow viewing room. The bill was laid over for inclusion in the omnibus budget bill.

Over the next several years, federal mandates deem Minnesota must achieve several goals for helping people with disabilities live in more independent settings based in communities. Articulated in Minnesota’s Olmstead Plan, named after the federal court case leading to the mandate, the plan calls for the transition of more than 10,000 individuals from group settings to independent housing. It will be essential for the state to address its staffing shortages in order to provide the infrastructure necessary to support these transitions.



About ARRM (The Association of Residential Resources of Minnesota)

ARRM is a nonprofit association of more than 200 Minnesotan providers, businesses and advocates dedicated to leading the advancement of community-based services that support people living with disabilities in their pursuit of meaningful lives. ARRM members support people with developmental, intellectual and physical disabilities including autism, brain injury and mental health needs. People served live in their own homes, adult foster care settings, and other community settings. Founded in 1970, ARRM continues to lead positive industry reforms that support Minnesotans with disabilities. To learn more, visit arm.org, and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).