

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minnesotans with Disabilities Face Devastating 7% Cut to Services if Bipartisan Fix not Signed into Law

St. Paul – May 23, 2018 – For parent Judy Marder and others in the disability community, fears are growing around what will happen if the 2018 legislative session results in a veto of the omnibus supplemental budget bill: a devastating seven percent cut to the rates many Minnesotans with disabilities rely on to live, work, and participate in their communities statewide.

In late February, the Minnesota Department of Human Services abruptly announced the cut and its effective date of July 1, 2018, resulting from a regulatory policy conflict between the state and federal government. The effect of the cut wipes out tens of millions of dollars each year going towards service quality enhancements and a more competitive workforce supporting Minnesotans with disabilities.

“Stopping this cut is *not* providing new money to disability services; it is simply maintaining the funding the state committed to my daughter and others who access disability services,” said Judy Marder, chair of the Best Life Alliance and parent to a child with disabilities. “The legislature had already allocated these funds to make needed investments in better wages and innovations for independent supports for Minnesotans with disabilities.”

A bipartisan legislative proposal to stop this cut passed the legislature this session and was sent to the Governor’s desk as part of the Omnibus Budget bill. If Governor Dayton does not sign this omnibus supplemental budget bill into law, several thousand Minnesotans with disabilities will face cuts to their assistance to access needed supports to live their best lives starting July 1, with thousands more facing cuts in future years.

“Recent policy changes allowed disability service providers to finally have the critical funds to start raising the low wages of direct care staff and retain the talented people who help my daughter and others who have disabilities live and work in non-institutional settings,” said Marder. “Now, I’m worried the state may turn its back on that progress. If the omnibus spending bill is vetoed, it will result in a cut to disability service rates which will move our state backwards in the progress we have made in supporting Minnesotans with disabilities to live meaningful and fulfilling lives.”

At a time of historic workforce shortages and increasingly uncompetitive wages, community-based services for people with disabilities cannot sustain further cuts. Allowing a seven percent cut while the rest of Minnesota’s economy moves forward may prove devastating -- resulting in even more pressure on the limited Direct Support Professional workforce, as well as jeopardizing access to the services that many Minnesotans with disabilities depend on to live and work in their communities.

The Minnesotans with disabilities, as well as the direct support staff and caregivers who support them, are counting on the Governor to enact the legislation he has been sent to stop the seven percent cut to

disability services.

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Best Life Alliance is a nonpartisan, statewide coalition of more than 130 organizations, people with disabilities, families and supporters advocating for Home & Community-Based Services. These essential services include training and employment programs, crisis respite services, group homes, Personal Care Assistance (PCA), and other services that allow people with disabilities to stay healthy, active, and independent.

Webpage: bit.ly/BestLifeMN

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