



# Sharing your Story: Engaging Families in Legislative Advocacy

## Tips for talking to your Legislators:



**Speak from the heart  
and share personal  
stories about your loved  
one and the difference  
they make.**



**Let your legislators  
know that you are a  
resource.**



**Whenever possible,  
include your loved one  
on communications.**

## WHY TAKE ACTION?

More than four decades ago in Minnesota, concerned citizens began a grassroots movement to improve services for people with disabilities. Their goal: to move Minnesotans with disabilities from state institutions into community-based settings.

Currently, our Direct Support Professional workforce which supports individuals living in the community is paid about 17% less than comparable careers with similar training and education requirements. Organizations supporting people with disabilities are calling on the legislature to address this wage gap with legislation in 2019. However, they can't do this alone.

Families and loved ones to individuals with disabilities are an important part of the story; we need you to be speaking with your legislator and advocating for higher wages for Direct Support Professionals. Your story will make a difference! Please take some time to contact your State House and Senate member today.

## HOW TO TAKE ACTION

Call or email them – enter your address here to find who represents you: <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>

- Hello Senator / Hello Representative:

“I am your constituent.”

Community-based disability services allow my family member to lead their best life...

- Talk about your family member(s) and the life they are able to lead because of the services they receive.
- Discuss the impact of constantly changing staff on the lives of your family member(s).
- THE ASK: Please prioritize passing legislation this session moving Minnesota towards a more stable rate system for disability services that supports Minnesotans accessing and providing disability services to live their Best Lives.

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# About the Best Life Alliance 2019 Legislative Ask



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## **Creates a Competitive Workforce Factor for disability service rates**

Analysis done by the Department of Human Services shows that wages for Direct Support Professionals are 17% lower than wages for professionals with similar training and education requirements.

Creating a competitive workforce factor within the Disability Waiver Rate System will create a mechanism to directly address wages for Direct Support Professionals into the future.

## **Adjust the timing of the scheduled rate re- basing to every two years.**

Current law adjusts rates every five years. The Best Life Alliance proposal moves that adjustment to every two years, allowing providers to better keep pace with actual economic conditions.

## **Collect data on workforce trends and conditions**

New reporting requirements contained within the legislation will allow providers to share the actual story of their current workforce and provide the legislature and the Department of Human Services the information needed to respond to current labor market and economic conditions that providers are facing.

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## **ABOUT ARRM**

ARRM is an association of providers, businesses and advocates dedicated to leading the advancement of community-based services that support people with disabilities in their pursuit of meaningful lives. We represent 160 providers who employ roughly 30,000 people. They provide supports for thousands of Minnesotans with developmental and physical disabilities, brain injury, mental illness and autism.

**Contact ARRM for more information about Home and Community-Based Services that support Minnesotans with disabilities.**

**For specific questions on ARRM's public policy agenda, contact:**

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