

## DWRS Sustainability *HF 999/ SF 1015*

The Best Life Alliance (BLA) legislation will make long-term, sustainable adjustments to the Disability Waiver Rate System. These changes will update the way disability waiver rates are set to reflect current economic conditions and support providers in raising the wages of their Direct Support and Supervisor staff in an effort to stand up and stabilize disability support services.



### Change the date of data used for current DWRS adjustments

Current law determines DWRS adjustments based on data that is 30 month and 1-day old. This results in adjustments that are based on economic conditions from 3 years ago. The BLA proposes using the most currently available data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics when adjusting the DWRS.



### Adjust DWRS to ensure that the Supervisor Wage does not fall below the Direct Support Professional Wage

The Best Life Alliance proposes setting a floor for Supervisor Wages, ensuring that the wage in the DWRS for Supervisors does not fall below the wage for Direct Support Professionals.



### Raise Employment Exploration SOC codes to align with Employment Development

The Best Life Alliance is proposing aligning the Standard Occupation Codes used to form the base wage for the Employment Exploration service with that of Employment Development, the subsequent service that an individual accesses when they are ready to move from exploring to securing a competitive, community-based job.



### Remove Unit-Based Respite from DWRS

Currently, Respite provided under 10 hours a day is billed in 15-minute increments and is subject to the DWRS framework rate versus the daily option, which is a market rate service. The BLA is proposing making Unit-Based Respite a market rate service, in alignment with how Daily Respite is currently operating. This will:

- Eliminate unnecessary inconsistency
- Allow providers to design programs that meet the unique needs of their community
- Work with counties on a payment rate that reflects the service
- Provide greater access to respite



### Fully fund the Competitive Workforce Factor, Move Up Scheduled Increase and Provide for Automatic Adjustments

The legislature created the Competitive Workforce Factor (CWF) in 2019 to support higher wages for Direct Support Professionals, but it hasn't been adjusted since its creation. The next scheduled rate adjustment for the DWRS isn't until November 2024 and is implemented on a rolling basis, as individuals' Service Authorizations are renewed. This means that most will not see rate adjustments until 2025. Providers cannot wait this long for adjusted reimbursement rates to support increasing wages for Direct Support Professionals. The BLA proposes moving the next adjustment up to January 2024 and allowing for an additional adjustment in 2025 and every two years after that.

## Workforce (HF813/SF993)

Staffing shortages are the number one concern of disability waiver service providers across the state. Along with long-term investments, we must make immediate infusions into our workforce to ensure safe and reliable services are available to anyone that needs them.

**Workforce Grants:** ARRM proposes a one-time investment of \$43 million in workforce grants for Direct Support Professionals, providing recruitment or retention bonuses for the entire DSP workforce of \$1,000 each.

**PSA Campaign for Caring Professions:** ARRM proposed a one-time investment of \$4 million for a Public Service Campaign for all Caring Professions. This campaign will be designed to draw the state's attention to the critical work that these professions do every day and the need for more to choose these jobs as their profession.

## AOST (HF339/SF758)

In the 14 years since Alternative Overnight Supervision with Technology (AOST) was put in place, technology has evolved greatly, driving a need to update AOST policy and regulations.

**License Streamlining:** ARRM's language will remove the need for providers to obtain a separate AOST license and instead utilize the protections and procedures that are currently in place within 245D, the Monitoring Technology usage policy and Remote Supports procedures.

## ICS (HF1416/SF1009)

Integrated Community Supports (ICS) is a new service available to individuals on the DD and CAC waivers in 2023. The service is designed for individuals that are not living in a typical four person Community Residential Setting but are not living completely independently in their own home. As the service has rolled out, providers have flagged issues with the current design of the service, barriers in housing available and unsustainability in the current funding structure.

**Service Changes:** ARRM proposes changes to the requirements for provider-controlled settings, removing restrictions on the number of providers that can provide the service in large apartment complex and similar settings, as well as funding changes within the DWRS specific to ICS.

## ICF (HF568/SF756)

Service rates for ICFs date back over 20 years and except for a couple minor adjustments, have gone untouched.

**Increase Wages:** ARRM proposes creating a new rate floor for these services, providing the resources for providers to increase staff wages and ensure safe and sustainable services going forward.

## Own Home/IHST (HF716/SF654)

Supporting people to live where they choose is a policy priority of the state, however, barriers are in place for people who choose to live in their own homes.

**Housing Security:** ARRM is partnering with The Arc MN and The Disability Law Center to propose strategic funding and policy changes to help more Minnesotans with disabilities live in their homes. Proposed changes include expanding access to shared services and making regulatory changes to Individualized Home Supports (IHS) services that make it more accessible to those who need it and more sustainable for providers to provide.



ARRM is a nonprofit association of more than 200 provider organizations, businesses and advocates dedicated to leading the advancement of home and community-based services supporting people living with disabilities in their pursuit of meaningful lives. Founded in 1970, ARRM continues to lead advocacy and training for positive industry reforms that support Minnesotans with disabilities.

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