



Minnesota Families &
Advocates Coalition
(MNFAC)

February 26, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, Family Members, & Friends of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:

Who we are:

The Minnesota Families and Advocates Coalition (MNFAC) was formed in January 2016 as a volunteer organization of parents and family members concerned with protecting the rights of individuals with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities in Minnesota.

MNFAC's Mission is faithful to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Olmsted Plan, and other legally mandated requirements that individuals' **choices** are paramount in determining residential, employment, and day services. It is with this legal foundation that MNFAC asserts that the Minnesota Department of Human services **must offer a range of residential, habilitation and employment options** to meet the diverse needs of individuals with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities.

MNFAC's Current Primary Concerns:

- 1) The **Disability Waiver Rate System (DWRS)**, which sets rates for all services will see a dramatic change throughout 2020, which could reduce rates, especially for traditional center-based day programs and traditional group homes. As a result, these rate cuts could jeopardize the survival of many programs and ultimately eliminate **choice** for individuals.
- 2) While there are three new **Employment Programs** in place that MNFAC supports, there is increasing pressure to eliminate the **14(c) Special Minimum Wage**, which we adamantly oppose. The elimination of 14(c) will jeopardize traditional center-based employment.
- 3) The **healthcare workforce crisis**, created by low wages, is another focus for us. There are approximately **18,500 open positions (19%) and high turnover rates (48%)** making it very difficult to get and keep high quality services for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Many service providers are reducing services as they cannot find and retain good quality Direct Service Professionals.

MNFAC's Goals include **statewide advocacy, awareness, and advisement**, and we invite all interested parents, guardians, family members, and friends to join and support the work being done by MNFAC on behalf of our loved ones with disabilities.

To receive more information and/or to join MNFAC, email your name and email address to:

mnfacgroup@gmail.com, or visit our website at www.MNFAC.org, and follow us on Facebook - [Minnesota Families and Advocates Coalition – MNFAC](#).

More about our Work:

1. We are meeting with parents and family members across the state, to provide education and our position on emerging initiatives that are affecting the 30,000 Minnesotans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Our current focus is on **DWRS** and the **Healthcare Workforce Crisis**, but we are concerned about changes coming in **HCBS** (Home and Community Based Services Medicaid Waiver requirements), **WIOA** (Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act), and the new **Employment Services** introduced by MN DHS in July 2018. Messages at these meetings include:

- a. MNFAC encourages parents and family members to **Know Their Numbers** (DWRS individualized rates for services for your loved one). We help educate parents, family members, and friends on the basics behind how rates are determined and how funding is secured. There is a lot of complexity behind the rate system, the **Home and Community Based Services** waiver rules, etc., and we provide education to help you understand and then effectively advocate for your loved one.
 - b. MNFAC encourages and educates parents and family members on how to work with their **Service Providers**, and find out what the impact of the new rates will have on them. In a broader sense, we want parents, family members and friends to actively support these providers in whatever they need to survive and hopefully grow under DWRS and the other mandates in effect. Many are facing difficulty with all the new requirements.
 - c. MNFAC encourages parents and family members to **communicate with their local legislators**, to educate them about the impending impact of DWRS. Incredibly, in late 2017 DHS and the federal Center of Medicare and Medicaid Services) eliminated DWRS rate increases that were approved by the MN Legislature in 2013-2014. These increases totaled about 7% and were wiped out effective July 1, 2018! The 2019 Legislature did approve a rate increase of 4.7% which does soften the blow, but more needs to be done.
2. MNFAC has developed a close relationship with **Disabilities Services Division** within **Minnesota Dept of Human Services**. Our members participate in public comment periods, are active members of advisory councils, and maintain good working relationships with many leaders within the division.
 3. MNFAC works with legislators, groups, and agencies like **MOHR** (member association of service providers who offer Day Training and Habilitation and Employment services), **ARRM** (member association of service providers who offer primarily residential services), **BLA** (Best Life Alliance, an advocacy organization that has a history of getting legislation passed in the Minnesota legislature for improvements in rates and other advances for people with IDD). MNFAC members attend **Minnesota House and Senate Health and Human Services** committee meetings and have testified numerous times to advocate for improved rates and other policy improvements.

What have we accomplished?

- 24+ education and advocacy presentations to parent/family forums across the state
- 15+ testimonies given to Senate and House HHS Committees in the 2017, 2018, and 2019 Legislative Sessions
- Membership/stakeholder on DWRS Advisory Committee, which meets every two months.
- Participated in regional CMS meetings to lobby for changes to HCBS implementation, now delayed until 2022
- Participating in Case Management Redesign project with DHS
- Membership on Best Life Alliance steering committee
- Established Website and Facebook site with up-to-date resources
- Membership in the This is Medicaid committee
- Membership on the Waiver Reimagine Committee
- Participated in the class action lawsuit with MOHR and ARRM to rescind the 7% rate cut
- Membership on Minnesota HCBS Settings Review Panel

We look forward to having you join MNFAC, to advocate effectively for maintaining and improving services for our loved ones with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

MNFAC Steering Team