

**Achieve Services**  
**Parents & Families Meeting**  
**September 23rd, 2021**



**PRESENTED BY TOM WEAVER**  
**CEO – ACHIEVE SERVICES**

# WELCOME!!

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## Meeting Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Update on Achieve Services
  - “Sustainability Plan”
- Policy Challenges
  - Task Force to eliminate Subminimum Wage (14c)
- Advocacy: A-Team MN and MNFAC
- Achieve Parents & Families Group
- Q&A

# DWRS Background

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- Our services are paid for primarily through “waivers,” with 50% state \$\$ and 50% federal \$\$.
- Because federal dollars are used, the federal government through the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) must approve our rate structure.
- In 2008, CMS instructed MN to change its rate system from a county-by-county system to a uniform system that better reflected the costs of services provided.

# DWRS Background

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- In 2013, the Legislature passed the Disability Waiver Rate System (DWRS), which totally restructured how rates are set for disability services.
- The DWRS creates a major shift in funding for many, creating some “winners” and many “losers.”
- To maintain some stability in the system, the legislature included a 6-year banding period, during which rates wouldn't change by more than .5 – 1%/year. The 6-year banding period expired on 12/31/19.

# DWRS Background

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- Banding protection has expired, and Achieve Services is expected to lose around 20% of our rate revenue.
- First year of unbanded rates was 2020, but impacts were masked by the COVID pandemic.
- Some DWRS losses will be mitigated by “inflationary adjustments”, but annual losses could still exceed \$400,000/yr.

# DWRS Impact on Achieve

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- Achieve’s historic rate enabled us to pay staff better wages and benefits.
  - Achieve’s staff turnover rate in 2016: 7%
  - Achieve’s turnover rate in 2019: 21%
  - Achieve’s turnover rate in 2020: 37%
  - Nationwide DSP turnover rate: Over 51%
- The DWRS is a “dumbing down” of programs like Achieve, and will continue to cause high staff turnover until meaningful changes to the rate formula occur.

# What are WE Doing?

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- Achieve applied for and Received a state DWRS Transition Grant
- Retained the Prouty Project to help us develop a sustainability plan:
  - Reviewed our financial structure;
  - Compared our finances/operations to a peer group;
  - Gathered stakeholder input; and
  - Developed a draft plan.

# Achieve Improvement Plan

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- **Goal 1: Improve Staff Hiring & Retention**
- **Strategies:**
  - Increase staff wages and bonuses;
  - Offer competitive wages in comparison to other programs (top 10% of peers);
  - Identify and offer incentives that appeal to staff; and
  - Create a communications committee to enhance dialogue between management and staff.



# Achieve Improvement Plan (cont'd)

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- **Goal 2: Increase Program Revenue by 10%**
  
- **Strategies:**
  - Increase DWRS Revenues:
    - Increase “exceptions” submissions;
    - Increase number of participants served to 215; and
    - Review/Update attendance policy.
  - Tap into Vocational Rehab Revenues:
    - Finalize and execute Voc Rehab contract with the state; and
    - Partner with school district to provide Voc Rehab to those transitioning to placements/employment.

# Achieve Improvement Plan (cont'd)

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- **Goal 3: Increase Fundraising & Grant Revenue**
- **Strategies:**
  - Increase number of donors and retention of donors;
  - Develop and promote a planned giving program;
  - Develop a monthly giving program;
  - Increase donor engagement outside of the “asks”;
  - Research, apply for, and track grant opportunities; and
  - Create an Achieve Parents Group to help build network of donors, supporters, and employers.

# Achieve Improvement Plan (cont'd)

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- Goal 4: Maximize Earning Potential of Investments
- Strategies:
  - Increase Achieve Endowment Portfolio to +\$1 million by July, 2022;
  - Continue to reinvest earnings; and
  - Analyze and develop a plan for portfolio growth, spending, and new ventures.

# Achieve Improvement Plan (cont'd)

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- Stakeholder Feedback

What are we missing?

- ✦ Other revenue-generating ideas?
- ✦ Other ideas for enhancing staff recruitment/retention?
- ✦ Other service improvement ideas?

- Submit comments to [info@achieveservices.org](mailto:info@achieveservices.org)

# Honoring Personal Choice

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Recognizing that we all have unique needs and desires, Achieve strives to provide a range of service options - so that our participants can *choose* the services that are most appropriate to their individual wants, needs, and circumstances.

# Choices

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- Competitive Community-based Employment
- Center-based work
- Non-employment Services

# THREATS TO CENTER-BASED WORK

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## What is Center-Based Work?

- Piece-work performed on-site at Achieve for a variety of employment partners.
- Examples include packaging greeting cards and ink cartridges, picking foam bricks, sorting rubber gaskets, etc.
- Wages are based on productivity: the Dept. of Labor requires we time-study each job, and subminimum wages must be commensurate with productivity.

# THREATS TO CENTER-BASED WORK

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## What is Center-Based Work? (cont'd)

- The federal regulation that allows the payment of “subminimum” or “commensurate” wages is commonly referred to as **14c**.
- Pre-COVID, about 130 of our participants were consistently doing 14c work. Today, with COVID and staffing challenges, that number is closer to 106.



# THREATS TO CENTER-BASED WORK

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During the 2021 Special Legislative Session, the legislature passed HF 33, a bill creating a *Task Force on Eliminating Subminimum Wages*.

See HF 33, Article 17, Section 14

[https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF33&type=bill&version=2&session=ls92&session\\_year=2021&session\\_number=1](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF33&type=bill&version=2&session=ls92&session_year=2021&session_number=1)

(Beginning on line 492.6)

# THREATS TO CENTER-BASED WORK

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HF 33 directs the task force to “*develop a plan and make recommendations to phase out payment of subminimum wages to people with disabilities on or before August 1, 2025.*”

# The Truth About Center-Based Work

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## ACHIEVE PARTICIPANTS ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE!

- Achieve workers have the option of seeking competitive, integrated community-based employment; or
- Performing subminimum wage work in accordance with US Dept. of Labor guidelines that ensure compensation is commensurate and fair; or
- Performing volunteer work and receiving other life-enriching services; or
- Some combination of the above.

# The Truth About Center-Based Work

- While it's true that “commensurate” wages are sometimes less than the state's minimum wage, our more productive workers earn wages that are much higher than the minimum wage.
- Workers/families/guardians frequently *choose* center-based work because:
  - They are working in a safe, supported, well-staffed environment;
  - They enjoy working with their friends and peers;
  - They have complicated support needs and don't feel comfortable working in the community; and
  - They feel much more vulnerable out in the community.

# The Truth About Center-Based Work

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- If subminimum wage work is eliminated, thousands of people with I/DD will lose their jobs – *and most will have no other employment options.*
- They will lose much more than a paycheck. They will also lose:
  - Their sense of purpose, and piece of their identity;
  - An important connection to a social peer group;
  - An opportunity to contribute;
  - An opportunity to be valued; and
  - The dignity of having and performing a job.

# The Truth About Center-Based Work

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- At Achieve, we believe we should all be working to provide *more* employment choices, *not fewer*; and
- We should respect and honor individual choices instead of dictating what's best for others.

# Achieve Parents Group

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- *The purpose of the new Achieve Parents Group is to:*
  - *Provide an open communication channel to discuss ideas, concerns, and opportunities for Achieve participants and staff; and*
  - *Help parents introduce Achieve to their networks, including businesses and individuals who might be interested in advancing Achieve's mission through employment opportunities, event attendance/sponsorship, and volunteer support.*

# What Can YOU do?

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## Get Involved!!

- Join A-Team MN
- Join MNFAC!!
- Join Achieve's Parents & Families Group
- Share your story
- Contact your legislators
- Sign up to testify
- **LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD**
- **Grassroots input from FAMILIES is critical!!**



# What Can YOU do?

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## Support Achieve

- Attend and/or contribute to our Fall Fundraiser on October 27th
- Tell your network about Achieve
- Include Achieve in your “planned giving”
- Buy/subscribe to Achieve Clean

# Resources

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- Achieve's "Advocate" web page (under "Support Us" tab)
  - [www.achieveservices.org](http://www.achieveservices.org)
- A-Team MN: [www.ateamminnesota.com](http://www.ateamminnesota.com)
- MNFAC: [www.mnfac.org](http://www.mnfac.org)
- MN-CCD (Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities)
  - [mnccd.org/](http://mnccd.org/)

# Resources (cont'd)

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- Who are my legislators?
  - <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>
- Where can I find the language/status of bills in the legislature?
  - [https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/status\\_search.php?body=House](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/status_search.php?body=House)

# Achieve Clean Laundry Detergent

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- Wash with a Cause!
- We employ Achieve participants to label and fill bottles, fulfill orders, and help with sales and marketing.
- Price: \$20
- Subscribe TONIGHT and receive \$5.00 off your first bottle.



**A C H I E V E C L E A N . O R G**

**QUESTIONS?**