

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

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

(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

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- 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
- A-Team MN: www.ateamminnesota.com
- MNFAC: www.mnfac.org
- MN-CCD (Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities)
 - 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

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?