

**Achieve Services**  
**Parents & Families Meeting**  
March 22nd, 2023



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

# WELCOME!!

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## Meeting Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Update on Policy Challenges
  - DWRS Funding
  - Task Force to Eliminate Subminimum Wages (14c)
- Advocacy: A-Team MN
- Achieve Wings Project
- 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 has lost around XX% 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” and “competitive workforce factor” (CWF) 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 2022: 29%
  - Nationwide DSP turnover rate: Over 50%
- 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.

# Current Environment

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- Today, Achieve serves about 160 participants, down from our Pre-Covid roster of 195.
- We currently have well over 100 people on waiting list to join Achieve.
  - Some of those on the list are in other programs
  - Many are waiting at home with no services
- The reason we can't serve more: We can't find staff willing to work for the wages we offer!!!

- We have a core group of rock-star staff who've been with us for years – and due to longevity, their wages are better (but still not enough).
- Biggest problem is entry level positions, where our starting rate for DSPs is only \$16.50/hour.
- That wage is a reflection of the funding we get from the state to provide our services – **IT IS NOT ENOUGH!!**



# Funding Opportunity

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- The State's \$17+ billion surplus presents a unique opportunity to address this issue!!
- DHS's own study last year confirmed that DSP's wages are 16.76% below wages for comparable jobs.

# Legislation to Support

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- **Best Life Alliance (BLA) Bill**
  - HF999 (Hanson)/SF1015 (Fateh)
  - Accelerates inflationary adjustments and fully-funds competitive workforce factor in the rate formula.
- **Please weigh in with your support for this bill!!**

# 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 a “special minimum” or “commensurate” wage 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*:

*“...established to develop a plan and make recommendations to phase out payment of subminimum wages to people with disabilities on or before August 1, 2025.”*

See HF 33, Article 17, Section 14  
(Beginning on line 492.6)

# THREATS TO CENTER-BASED WORK

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## Task Force Recommendations:

HF 2513 (Hanson)

SF 2669 (Maye Quade)

- Beginning on Aug 1, 2023, employers cannot hire any new workers with disabilities at less than minimum wage;
- Beginning on Aug 1, 2025, special minimum wage work (14c) no longer allowed in MN.



# THREATS TO CENTER-BASED WORK

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- Governor's Recommendations

HF 2847 (Noor)

SF 2934 (Hoffman)

- Beginning on Aug 1, 2026, employers cannot hire any new workers with disabilities at less than minimum wage;
- Beginning on Aug 1, 2028, special minimum wage work (14c) no longer allowed in MN.

# 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 strongly opposes the elimination of 14c work as a choice for the people we serve!

# A-Team Minnesota

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- A-Team MN is a state-wide organization comprised of parents and families of people with disabilities.
- A-Team MN is at the legislature advocating on behalf of people with disabilities, including
  - Increased funding to increase DSP wages
  - Preserving 14c as an employment option
- Sue Hankner (Co-Founder) – A-Team MN
- More info at [ateamminnesota.com](http://ateamminnesota.com)

# What Can YOU do?

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## Get Involved!!

- Join A-Team MN!
- Share your story
- Contact your legislators
- Sign up to testify
- Disability Day at the Capitol – March 28th
- 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 fundraisers
- 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)
  
- Watch for Achieve and/or A-Team “Action Alerts”

# 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!
- All natural, unscented, powerful cleaning formula.
- 60 loads/bottle
- We employ Achieve participants to label and fill bottles, fulfill orders, and help with sales and marketing.
- Price: \$20

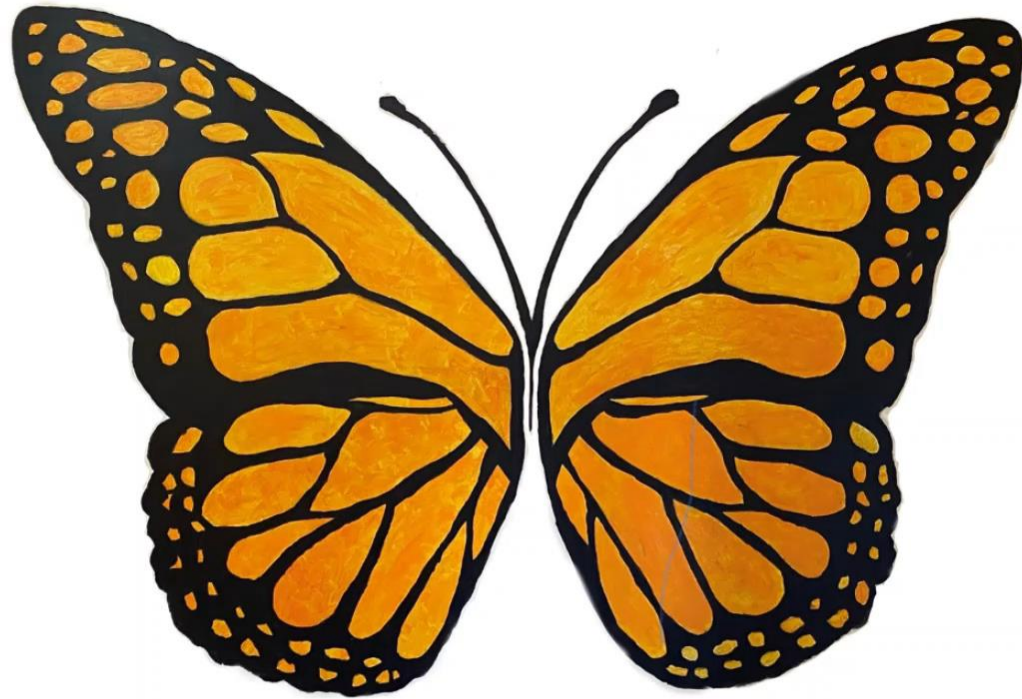


**A C H I E V E C L E A N . O R G**

# Achieve Wings

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# Achieve Wings

Northtown Mall

Blaine, Minnesota

# QUESTIONS?