

HB 1012 : Developmental Disabilities Section 11 funding

March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Good afternoon Chairman Holmberg and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the chance to speak with you all today. Upon hearing that the funding for Section 11 is under consideration to be eliminated, I wanted to share with you what I have experienced in my role as Executive Director at Community Living Services about the necessity for Section 11 services, and I wanted to ensure that you had the opportunity to hear from those most impacted by the decision. Of the 77 people in North Dakota that receive services from the Section 11 program, CLS supports 33 of them. These are individuals that have developmental disabilities, but they do not qualify for other DD waiver services.

In most cases, these are people that would otherwise fall through the cracks, and the minimal services that they receive through Section 11 are a lifeline to health, safety, and community integration. The specific needs of Section 11 program participants may not be related to mental health or physical disability, and therefore those currently served in this program, in many cases, would not be eligible for other supports, like QSP or Behavioral Health Supports.

Many of the people we support in Section 11 have been in the program for many years, and the services each person needs vary based on their individual circumstances. For some, the services include assistance with medical appointments and health care supports. For others, it may be money management and budgeting supports. Sometimes it is help accessing grocery stores and pharmacies. In some cases, they need supports to find and maintain employment. Sometimes it is helping with applications for housing and benefits. Additionally, supports have been needed to assist with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In all cases, Section 11 services improve the quality of life for the people receiving it.

Although the current funding for the Section 11 program does not cover the total expense of the providing these supports, we recognize that this program is so significant to its participants, that we are happy to advocate to maintain the current level of funding, so that these individuals are not left without support.

One or two hours of support a week might seem insignificant or dispensable, but to people in the Section 11 program these are crucial. They can protect people with developmental disabilities from unemployment, homelessness, hospitalization, institutionalization, food insecurity, and discrimination.

I urge you to maintain funding for the Section 11 program, so that North Dakotans with disabilities do not lose the supports that mean so much to them.

I greatly appreciate your time and am open to any questions you may have.

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