

NEWS RELEASE

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Questions may be directed to:

Bruce Nelson, ARRM • bnelson@arrm.org • 651-492-8645



The 5% CAMPAIGN
Committing to Life in the Community for
People with Disabilities & Older Adults

5% Campaign calls on Gov. Dayton to fund disability and older adult services

Advocates for Minnesotans with disabilities and older adults called on Gov. Dayton today to include a rate increase in his supplemental budget for home and community based services. The request followed news of an improved state budget forecast.

Members of The 5% Campaign, a coalition of 130 community organizations asking for the rate increase, noted that over the past ten years rate increases have lagged far behind the cost of living. “That means that caregivers are still woefully underpaid,” campaign spokesperson Bruce Nelson said. “The vast majority of the money in our request would go to increase wages and benefits for 90,000 professional caregivers,” Nelson said.

“Quality care for older adults and people with disabilities is one of the biggest challenges of our times,” Nelson said. “Demographics demand our attention. The number of older adults is soaring and people with disabilities are now living much longer lives. We simply must have the resources to pay our caregivers a good wage and assure quality care.”

Two bills asking for a five percent rate increase in each of the next two years have been introduced in the legislature by Sen. Kent Eken (DFL-Twin Valley) and Rep. Rod Hamilton (R-Mountain Lake).

“Minnesota is a state that makes sure everyone has a good quality of life,” Eken said. “But we must address a statewide need to adequately fund these essential services. They ensure health and safety and allow people with disabilities and older adults to remain independent in their communities. With the budget surplus, there is no better time than now.”

“Consistent care for older adults and people with disabilities is the greatest contributor to a high quality of life,” Hamilton said. “Increasing wages and benefits for the struggling caregivers who work hard to support Minnesota’s most vulnerable citizens will reduce staff turnover and ensure quality services. Providing a five percent increase to Home and Community-Based Services this session is simply the right thing to do.”

Hamilton and Eken’s bills, H.F. 564 and S.F. 646, have bipartisan support in both bodies.

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