

## ➤ *Governor Signs Health & Human Services Bill*

On Tuesday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, Governor Dayton (photo) signed the final health and human services (HHS) bill, which passed during the 2017 Special Session. A summary of how the provisions we have been tracking this session turned out:

- Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS) was amended to make the program work for more adults. This will be done by expanding the exceptions process and creating a pathway for individuals residing in institutions to access CDCS more quickly.
- Minnesota Supplemental Aid Housing Assistance will be expanded so more people with disabilities can find housing that increases their independence.
- Parental fees were reduced 13%. This change will take effect July 1, 2017.
- The Medical Assistance spenddown was raised 1%, which will allow people to keep approximately \$10 more of their own income each month.
- \$496,000 in new funding was provided for statewide self-advocacy efforts.
- New services to provide additional support to those looking for competitive employment were approved, pending approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).
- Across the board wage increases for direct support professionals were not included in the HHS bill. PCAs under the SEIU contract will receive a 1.5% increase. A three percent increase had been negotiated by the Dayton Administration, but the percentage was reduced by the Legislature.



Any successes we had this session would not have happened without your advocacy. Whether you were wearing your yellow shirt at the State Capitol in support of lower parental fees; sharing your story on the necessity of increasing income and asset limits to help people with disabilities receive Medicaid supports to stay independent; rallying, e-mailing, and/or visiting state legislators to get much-needed wage increases for direct care professionals; speaking up for greater innovations in services; or more than one of the above, your advocacy benefited people with disabilities and their families across the state. We look forward to working with you to build on these successes and to face continued threats to disability services and supports. Thank you!

## ➤ *“This is Medicaid” Draws Good Crowds and Good Discussion*

Three successful “This is Medicaid” community conversations were held on Wednesday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, in Bloomington, St. Cloud, and Northfield. The attendance ranged from 20 individuals at [the St. Cloud forum](#) to an estimated 200 in Bloomington. At each forum, attendees heard a policy expert provide an overview of Medicaid in Minnesota, highlighting the variety of Minnesotans on Medicaid (known as Medical Assistance in Minnesota) and the services and supports they receive. Erin Parrish, Outreach and Advocacy Coordinator for AARP, did this presentation at the St. Cloud forum that I participated in. Cindy Owen, Executive Director, The Arc Midstate (photo, right), shared her compelling story about how Medicaid matters to her family, and I shared how



Photo: WJON - St. Cloud

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Minnesotans with a variety of disabilities have benefitted from Medicaid and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (photo, center).

The forums elicited good questions from the audience, and some of those attending shared their fears about how losing Medicaid would negatively impact them or their family members. At the end of our meeting, members of the audience filled out large cards sharing their individual or family stories about how Medicaid benefits them. These cards will be shared with our congressional delegation. Thanks to everyone who came and participated in each event. The Arc Minnesota will be participating in future activities with the large “This Is Medicaid” group of stakeholders that put together these events.

### ➤ *Sharing Your Medicaid Story with the App*

As the U.S. Senate now works on its proposal to repeal the Affordable Care Act and make changes to Medicaid, stories to our members of Congress about Medicaid’s importance continue to be a top priority. We have a number of tools on the [“Take Action” page of our website](#) to help you prepare and share your story. One of those tools is the [“Telling Your Story” app](#). This app can be downloaded to your smart phone or tablet, and you can use the app to both create your story and send it to your elected officials. Go to [our website for links](#) that will help you download the app and give you tips on how to use it. Thanks to the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities for creating this helpful tool.



### ➤ *Tell Your Story to Our U.S. Senators*

The Arc of the U.S. urges its members to share their Medicaid stories with their state’s U.S. Senators to make them aware of the impact the AHCA will have on people with disabilities and their families. Staff members from Sen. Amy Klobuchar’s and Sen. Al Franken’s offices are taking personal stories from the public. E-mail your story to Sen. Amy Klobuchar’s office at [Susie\\_Nanney@klobuchar.senate.gov](mailto:Susie_Nanney@klobuchar.senate.gov) or at [Jordan\\_Grossman@klobuchar.senate.gov](mailto:Jordan_Grossman@klobuchar.senate.gov) ; Sen. Franken’s e-mail for your stories is [SaveMyCoverage@franken.senate.gov](mailto:SaveMyCoverage@franken.senate.gov). Please e-mail a copy of your story to [Mike Gude](#), too.

### ➤ *Friends and Family Across U.S. Can Help Protect Medicaid, Too*

Do you have a family member, friend, or colleague who lives in one of the following states?

*Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kentucky, Maine, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.*

If so, U.S. Senators in these states are key players in the debate over the Senate bill to repeal the ACA and change Medicaid. Ask your relatives, friends, and anyone else your network who lives outside of Minnesota to connect with their U.S. Senators, and to urge those senators to oppose caps and cuts to Medicaid services. Your contacts can reach their senators by calling the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121. If they don’t know who their U.S. Senators are, they can find that information by going to <http://www.senate.gov/states/>