

Public Policy Update

December 22, 2010

From Steve Larson, Public Policy Director



➤ *Turbulent Session Preview*

Meetings were held last week with Rep. Jim Abeler (Anoka) and Senator David Hann (Eden Prairie), new Chairs of the Health and Human Services Finance Committees in the House and Senate, respectively.

Rep. Abeler shared that the House will ask his committee to cut \$1.6 billion from the \$11 billion health and human services budget. This is a 14.5% cut. He asked the disability community to share their ideas about how to implement this cut with the least harm to individuals and to continue to support those programs that are the most cost-effective and effective.



Rep. Jim Abeler



Sen. David Hann

Senator Hann is new to the Health and Human Services Finance Committee. He will hold informational hearings in January so his committee members can understand all the programs they will oversee. He also expressed his concern about Minnesota's reliance on federal dollars and the strings attached to those dollars. We offered to be resource on all issues impacting persons with disabilities that will be discussed and reviewed during this legislative session.

This past Friday, staff at the Minnesota Dept. of Human Services reiterated that they were asked by the current administration to prepare a menu of scenarios to cut the budget, ranging from five percent cuts to 15 percent cuts. Governor-Elect Dayton and his new staff will review these scenarios as they put together the Governor's budget proposal, which will be released around February 15th.

➤ *Minnesota Senate Democrats Assign Their Members to Key Committees*

Minnesota Senate Democrats announced their committee assignments late last week. Democrats serving on the Health and Services committee will be:

- Senator Linda Berglin, Lead, Minneapolis
- Senator Linda Higgins, Minneapolis
- Senator Tony Lourey, Kerrick
- Senator, John Marty, Roseville
- Senator Kathy Sheran, Mankato

Serving on the E-12 Education Committee will be:

- Senator Leroy Stumpf, Lead, Plummer
- Senator Terri Bonoff, Minnetonka



- Senator Linda Scheid, Brooklyn Park
- Senator Katie Sieben, Newport
- Senator Patricia Torres Ray, Minneapolis
- Senator Charles Wiger, Maplewood

➤ *Sign Up for Disability Day at the Capitol!*

You can now register for Disability Matters Day at the Capitol, to be held Tuesday, January 25, 2011. [Click here](#) for a registration flyer, or go to the “Take Action” section of our website. We need your help more than ever this Legislative Session, and we need your presence and voice at the Capitol on January 25! The event is free, but you’ll have to provide your own lunch.



Here’s the agenda for that day:

- **Learn about key legislative issues at a legislative briefing.**
- **Join other advocates at a noon rally in the Capitol Rotunda.**
- **Visit your legislators, and educate them about how important disability programs and services are to you.**

We look forward to seeing you January 25th!

➤ *Money Follows the Person Demonstration Grant*

The Continuing Care Division of the Minnesota Dept. of Human Services will apply for a Money Follows the Person Demonstration Grant in January. Twenty-nine other states already have this grant. The purpose of the grant is help individuals currently residing in nursing homes and intermediate care facilities for persons with developmental disabilities (ICF/MRs) to move into more community-based living situations. In addition, there are components of the grant that will strengthen our community-based services by funding more person-centered planning, greater housing access, and employment supports. Individuals moving as a result of this effort will be eligible for a higher federal match for Medical Assistance, thus bringing more dollars to Minnesota. The grants will be awarded to states in April.

➤ *Luther Granquist To Be Recognized March 12th*



The Arc of Minnesota’s Public Policy Recognition Event honors individuals for their lifetime achievements in improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families. This year’s honoree is Luther Granquist. Luther was the lead attorney in the Welsch case when it began in the 1970s, as parents and others raised their voices against inhumane conditions in state hospitals. For 36 years, he “fought the good fight” for the legal and human rights of individuals with disabilities, say his colleagues at the Minnesota Disability Law Center. This year’s event will be held on March 12, 2010 at 10 a.m. at the Midland Hills Country Club in Roseville. If you would to attend this event, contact Sara Larson at 651-523-0823, ext. 107 or saral@arcmn.org for more information.