

Public Policy Update

February 7, 2011

From Steve Larson, Public Policy Director



➤ *The Arc Shines Spotlight on HMO's Proposal to Slash Services*

The Arc of Minnesota and MN-CCD reacted quickly to the HMOs' report, "Minnesota's Healthcare Imperative," which recommended cuts and reductions to services for persons with disabilities. KSTP-TV reporter Jay Kolls alerted us to this report a few weeks ago, and I was able to react strongly in [an interview aired on Wednesday January 19th](#). The report was officially released on Thursday January 27th. Working with MN-CCD staff and volunteers, we helped quickly organized a news conference for Monday, January 31st, which received great coverage. [Go to our blog for links to that coverage](#) and for further details.

➤ *Dayton Appoints DHS Commissioner*



Lucinda Jesson

On Tuesday, January 11th, Governor Mark Dayton Named Lucinda Jesson as Commissioner of Human Services. Jesson, who previously was a law professor at Hamline University in St. Paul, has also been a prosecutor and Deputy Attorney General for the State of Minnesota. As a deputy attorney general, she was responsible for health care and licensing from 1993 to 1998.

In addition, Jesson served as a private practice attorney, specializing in health care law; represented hospitals, clinics, and managed care organizations; and wrote scholarly works on health reform and regulation. In an article in the *Star Tribune* announcing her appointment, Jesson said she wants the agency to be known nationwide during her tenure as a place for creative, innovative, and cost-efficient delivery of vital services.

➤ *Day at the Capitol Draws Hundreds to the Capitol*

Disability Matters Day at the Capitol was a great success. More than 330 self-advocates, family members, advocates, and professionals gathered at the Capitol to share their stories with legislators. Participants also attended legislative briefings and were very vocal at a rally in the Capitol Rotunda. See our site on [Flickr.com](#) for photos of the event. We also received [press coverage](#) from radio, TV, and print media.

Thanks to our local chapters of The Arc across the state who brought many of their members and self-advocates. Thanks also to our co-sponsors: Advocating Change Together, Brain Injury Association of Minnesota, People First of Minnesota, and Self-Advocates Minnesota. The event would not have been a success without our chapters and partners.

The presence of all you who attended was vital, too. Disability Matters Day at the Capitol is only the first event of many this legislative session where your voice is necessary. Make a commitment to attend other civic engagement activities throughout the session, including Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Capitol.

These events begin at 10 a.m. in the former State Office Building Cafeteria. We now have fact sheets from Day at the Capitol on our legislative priorities posted [on our website](#).

➤ *House File (HF) 130 Makes Cuts That Could Hurt Persons with Disabilities*

HF 130 passed on the House floor January 27th; its companion passed the Senate February 3rd. These bills cut spending by up to \$1 billion; supporters see this as a first step to solving the \$6.2 billion deficit. If passed, HF 130 could have a significant impact on county-funded programs for persons with disabilities, including day training and habilitation (DT&H) funding for adults not on the waiver or who live in an intermediate care facility (ICF), semi-independent living services (SILS) funding, and respite care. HF 130 now goes to a House-Senate conference committee. The Governor has sent signals that he will veto the bill; therefore, we are not sending an action alert at this time.



➤ *Town Hall Forums and Home Visits a Great Success*

Arc Greater Twin Cities hosted a Town Hall Forum at the Fairview Community Center in Roseville on Thursday, January 13th. More than 40 Arc members attended and were able to speak with Senators Chuck Wiger (Maplewood) and Roger Chamberlain, (Lino Lakes) and Representative Mindy Greiling (Roseville). Ten individuals shared their stories, and the legislators were very supportive in their final comments.

On Thursday evening, January 20th, Scott and Laura Price opened their Andover home for a visit with Sen. Michelle Benson (Ham Lake) and Rep. Peggy Scott (Andover). Six couples attended, sharing their stories about adopting children with disabilities, including Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; losing PCA services; transportation challenges; and the effectiveness of consumer-directed community supports in their lives.

Arc Greater Twin Cities has scheduled one more home visit, this time with Hennepin County officials and legislators in State Legislative District 43. It will be on February 8th, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., at the home of Ann and Craig Strom, 16430 42nd Avenue North in Plymouth, MN. For more info, contact Gene Martinez at genemartinez@arcgreatertwincities.org

➤ *We Can Provide Support for Your Advocacy Efforts*

Just another reminder of two sources of support here at The Arc of Minnesota office for your public policy advocacy: Les Bauer and Jean Bender, our Volunteer Civic Engagement Coordinators. Les is working with Greater Minnesota chapters of The Arc to encourage their constant involvement in public policy this session. Jean is available to individuals and chapters to help with personal stories to legislators. Both are available to do a Power Point presentation on the various ways you can engage your legislators and be an effective in your advocacy to elected officials. Les can be reached at LWMBauer@msn.com; Jean's e-mail is JeanB@arcmn.org

➤ *Sign Up for Our Event to Honor Luther*

You can now sign up online for our Public Policy Recognition Event to honor Luther Granquist's dedicated advocacy for persons with disabilities and his many accomplishments throughout his career. Join us on March 12, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the Midland Hills Country Club in Roseville. Go to the [Public Policy Recognition Event](#) page of our website to register, submit stories, and see our list of sponsors.